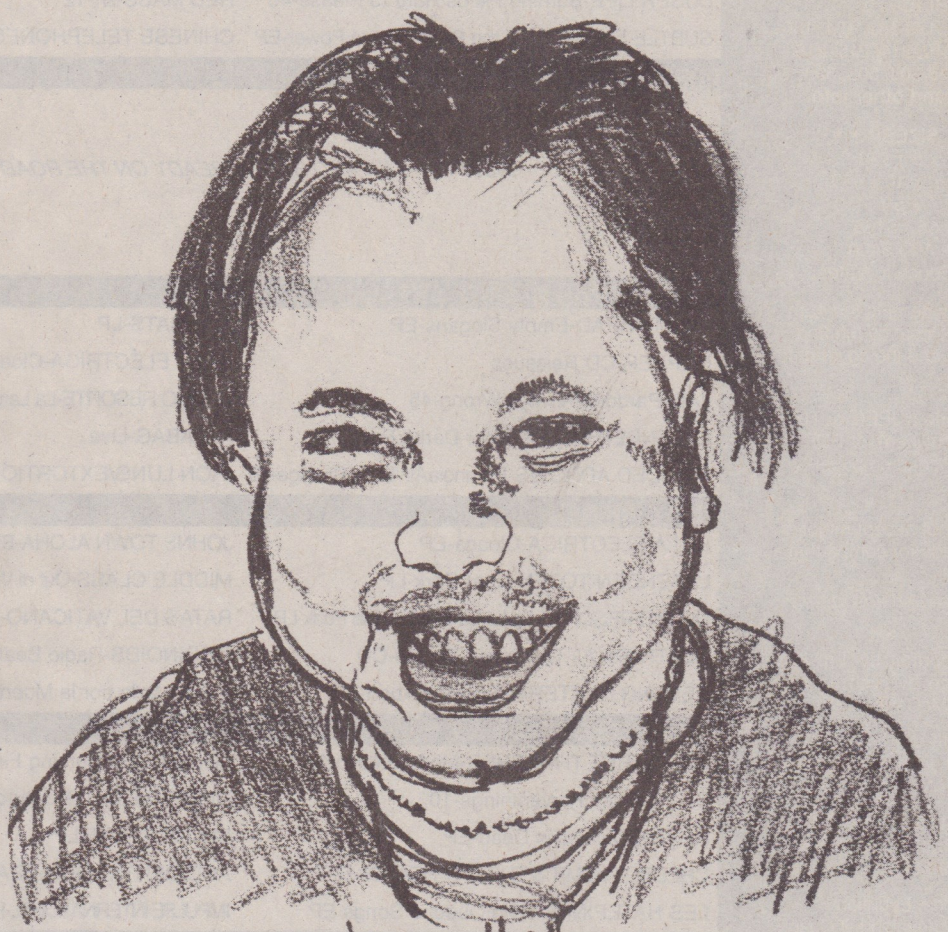
MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

#310 March '09 4$ in US & Canada

the Health Issue



-Lance Hahn-

Overthrow cock rock idolize your girlfriend

Year End Top Tens

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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See page 4 for pricing and other info.

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

JUSTIN BRIGGS

- KREIGSHÖG/DEATHTRIBE-Split-EP
- NO GOAL-Vital-EP
- MORNE-Demo-LP
- ZYANOSE-Lovele SS-EP
- LEBENDEN TOTEN-Near Dark-LP
- JOHNS TOWN ALOHA-Bloody Ravens Wander-EP
- SILLA ELÉCTRICA-Cloaca-EP
- GROINOIDS-Radio Beat Sessions-EP
- REPOMAN-Quality Time-EP
- MÖRPHEME/NERVESKADE-Live

TIM BROOKS

- JAIL-Pardono/Always Wrong-45
- BETONG HYSTERIA-Spontan Abort-EP
- SOMETHING FIERCE-There Are No Answers-EP
- LOSER LIFE-Burning Fields/Hard to Please-45
- SUBTLE TURNHIPS-F the People F the Power-EP
- PIERCED ARROWS-ParanoiaAin't Life Strange-45
- DEATH-For All The World To See-CD
- LEBENDEN TOTEN-Near Dark-LP
- RED MASS-s/t-12"
- CHINESE TELEPHONES-Game of Pricks-EP

ROBERT COLLINS

NEW TOP TEN AND HE'S ALREADY ON THE ROAD

PAUL CURRAN & ARIEL AWESOME

- FIX MY HEAD-Empty Slogans-EP
- FLIPPER-CD Reissues
- JAIL-Pardono/Always Wrong-45
- LEBENDEN TOTEN-Near Dark-LP
- PIERCED ARROWS-ParanoiaAin't Life Strange-45
- THE RATS-LP
- SILLA ELÉCTRICA-Cloaca-EP
- ULTIMO RESORTE-La Larga Sombra Del Punk-LP
- FLEABAG-Live
- IRON LUNG/EXTORTION-Live

LAYLA GIBBON

- SILLA ELÉCTRICA-Cloaca-EP
- LEBENDEN TOTEN-Near Dark-LP
- ULTIMO RESORTE-La Larga Sombra Del Punk-LP
- DEATH-For All The World To See-CD
- BETONG HYSTERIA-Spontan Abort-EP
- JOHNS TOWN ALOHA-Bloody Ravens Wander-EP
- MIDDLE CLASS-Out of Vogue The Early Material-LP
- RATAS DEL VATICANO-Mocosos Pateticos LP
- GROINOIDS-Radio Beat Sessions-EP
- V/A-Matado por la Muerte-LP / FLIPPER Reissues

BOB GOLDIE

- MARGARET THRASHER-Moderate Rock-LP
- SLIPS-False Forventninge-10"
- HI JINX-Cutlass is Dead-EP
- CHESTER VOMIT & THE DRY HEAVES-EP
- LES HATEPINKS-Hate!Oupupo Songs EP
- LOSER LIFE-Burning Fields/Hard to Please-45
- DISCO ASSAULT-Saturday Night Bleeder-EP
- BLANK STARE-LP
- ACCIDENTAL GUN DEATH-Skies Are Blue-EP
- IMPULSE INTERNATIONAL-Hollywood Underground-45

KENNY KAOS

- BLOW UP-Our Fire-EP
- BAD LUCK #12-Rocky Road to Ruin-EP
- SNOT ROCKETTES-45
- CLOSET FAIRIES/PARTY GARBAGE-Split EP
- THE SPURTS-What Goes Around-EP
- LES HATEPINKS-Kindergarten Revolution-EP
- CHESTER VOMIT & THE DRY HEAVES-EP
- IMPULSE INTERNATIONAL-Hollywood Underground-45
- THE GOTHIEFS-Hong Kong Rocks/Limited Applied-45
- FUCK KNIGHTS-Kristina-EP

CAROLYN KEDDY

- THE GOTHIEFS-Hong Kong Rocks/Limited Applied-45
- RATAS DEL VATICANO-Mocosos Pateticos LP
- HUNCHES-Exit Dreams LP
- PHOTOBOOTH-Da Me Tus Besos-EP
- SUBTLE TURNHIPS-F The People F The Power-EP
- SUDDEN WALKS-Haulin' Ass-EP
- LES HORMONES-Peggy-EP
- GROINOIDS-Radio Beat Sessions-EP
- LES HATEPINKS-Hate!Oupupo Songs EP
- FLIPPER-CD Reissues

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL IS A MONTHLY PUBLICATION. ALL WORK IS DONATED AND NO ONE RECEIVES ANY SALARY. ALL PROCEEDS ARE EITHER INVESTED IN TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS OR GO TO OTHER SIMILARLY NOT-FOR-PROFIT PROJECTS. ANYONE IS WELCOME TO REPRINT ANYTHING FROM MRR, BUT ONLY IF IT'S NOT-FOR-PROFIT.

TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl, CD-only , or demo releases to the address on the previous page.

RAY LUJAN

NERVOUS TICS-Stupid Little Heart-EP	JAIL-Pardono/Always Wrong-45
VITAMIN PARTY-Back On Task-CD	TROUBLEKID-Identity Crisis-CD
IMPULSE INTERNATIONAL-Hollywood Underground-45	ALTERNATIVE ACTION-Thin Line-CD
SCREWTOP DETONATORS -3,2,1, I'm Done-CD	CARS CAN BE BLUE-Doubly Unbeatable-CD
SOMETHING FIERCE-There Are No Answers-CD	V/A-Groovie Ghoulies Tribute-CD

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

NATIVE TONGUE-Blame It On Gravity-LP	MIDDLE CLASS-Out of Vogue The Early Material-LP
LOSER LIFE-Burning Fields/Hard to Please-45	PIERCED ARROWS-ParanoiaAin't Life Strange-45
PHOTOBOOTH-Da Me Tus Besos-EP	CHINESE TELEPHONES-Game of Pricks-EP
SILLA ELÉCTRICA-Cloaca-EP	IMPULSE INTERNATIONAL-Hollywood Underground-45
FIX MY HEAD-Empty Slogans-EP	LES HATEPINKS-Kindergarten Revolution-EP

MARK MURRMANN

LOS IMPALA-Estos Son-10"	SILLA ELÉCTRICA-Cloaca-EP
CHESTER VOMIT & THE DRY HEAVES-EP	V/A-Matado por la Muerte-LP
RATAS DEL VATICANO-Mocosos Pateticos LP	LES HORMONES-Peggy-EP
THE GOTHIEFS-Hong Kong Rocks/Limited Applied-45	GRAVE BLANKETS-Our Love is Real-EP
BETONG HYSTERIA-Spontan Abort-EP	JAIL--45 /SPIDER BAGS-Hey Delinquent-45

BRUCE ROEHRS

COLD STARE-Last TIme-EP	PIERCED ARROWS-ParanoiaAin't Life Strange-45
REPOMAN-Quality Time-EP	HELLSHOCK/ANNIHILATION TIME-Live
ALTERNATIVE ACTION-Thin Line-CD	DISCO ASSAULT-Saturday Night Bleeder-EP
BLANK STARE-LP / MORNE-Demos-LP	TOXIC HOLOCAUST/THREE INCHES OF BLOOD /
FIX MY HEAD-Empty Slogans-EP	EARLY MAN-Live

FRED SCHRUNK

MARGARET THRASHER-Moderate Rock-LP	LEBENDEN TOTEN-Near Dark-LP
ULTIMO RESORTE-La Larga Sombra Del Punk-LP	GET BENT-side of split EP
DELAY/MONIKERS-Split EP	SUDDEN WALKS-Haulin' Ass Gettin' Paid-EP
CLOSET FAIRIES/PARTY GARBAGE-Split EP	FLIPPER-CD Reissues
SILLA ELÉCTRICA-Cloaca-EP	FINALLY PUNK / GRASS WIDOW Live

CISSIE SCURLOCK

LEBENDEN TOTEN-Near Dark-LP	ULTIMO RESORTE-La Larga Sombra Del Punk-LP
KREIGSHÖG/DEATHTRIBE-Split-EP	GROINOIDS-Radio Beat Sessions-EP
JOHNS TOWN ALOHA-Bloody Ravens Wander-EP	PIERCED ARROWS-ParanoiaAin't Life Strange-45
SILLA ELÉCTRICA-Cloaca-EP	MORNE-Demo-LP
ZYANOSE-Lovele SS-EP	ULTRATUMBADOS-Soy Un Elegide-EP

MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

LEBENDEN TOTEN-Near Dark-LP	KREIGSHÖG/DEATHTRIBE-Split-EP
FIX MY HEAD-Empty Slogans-EP	ZYANOSE-Lovele SS-EP
ULTIMO RESORTE-La Larga Sombra Del Punk-LP	SILLA ELÉCTRICA-Cloaca-EP
MIDDLE CLASS-Out of Vogue The Early Material-LP	GROINOIDS-Radio Beat Sessions-EP
RATAS DEL VATICANO-Mocosos Pateticos LP	BETONG HYSTERIA-Spontan Abort-EP

ZINE TOP TEN

When Language Runs Dry #1	*On T'Road #11*
Brainwash #2	*Brains #3*
Big Whoop #3	*Toothworm #3*
East Village Inky #39	*Punk Life #40*
End of a Perfect Day #11	*Zombie Bomb #38*

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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Umlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waffle, Flat Earth Recs.

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#221/Oct '01. The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11, Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, ""US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilenny Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl, Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech and New Zealand scene reports.

#268/September'05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

#277/June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

#278/July '06. Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuicity, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

#279/August '06. Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest, Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

#280/September '06. Hjerte Stop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

#281/October '06. Out With a Bang, Redd Kross, Derek Lyn Plastic, We March, Alan Milman, Rat Traps, Blood Robots, The Scarred, Gilbert Switzer, Japan & US photo spreads, Sweden & UK scene reports.

#282/November '06. The Feelers, PESD, Toxic Ephex, Auktion, Bruise Violet, *Trust* fanzine, The Homosexuals, The Effigies, Rat City Riot, New York City & North Carolina scene reports.

#283/December '06. Jay Reatard interview & photos, Crimes Against Humanity Records, A Touch of Hysteria, Doris Fanzine, Kvoteringen, '90s Punk Scumpit Part II, Black Chrome, The Dirty Water Club, photos, Tokyo scene report.

#284/January '07. Margaret Thrasher, 924 Gilman at 20 Years, Order of the White Rose, Regress, Subhumans (UK) Part One, Blank Its, Condenada, Genetic Control, photos, Syracuse & San Diego scene reports.

#285/February '07. Randy "Biscuit" Turner of the Big Boys & the early Texas punk scene, Lemuria, Ruin, Subhumans (UK) Part Two, The Blinds, Tranzistors, ANS, Riot This, La Piovra, Bay Area scene pics, Barcelona, Spain scene report.

#286/March '07. Best of 2006, Smartut Kahol Lavan, Electric Kisses, Holy Shit!, Lost Cherrees Part One, Go!, Kraljevo, Serbia, and Bakersfield, CA scene reports.

#287/April '07. Alicja Trout, Keith Rosson (*Avow* zine), Crap Corps, The Vicious, Scum System Kill, Lost Cherrees Part Two, Restless Youth, SBV, Australia, Kyiv, Ukraine, and Pittsburgh, PA scene reports.

#288/May '07. Clockcleaner, Pisschrist, The Rats (Sweden), Conflict (US), The Viletones, Violent Tumor, Czech Republic and East Texas scene reports.

#289/June '07. Ultimo Resorte, Kursk, Masstrauma, Social Circkle, Final Approach, Post Punk Kitchen, Southern Death Cult, Portland Drummers, Timisoara, Copenhagen, and Pampanga scene reports.

#290/July '07. Stormcrow, Merkit, Solid Decline, Monster Squad, Sex Vid, Vivisick, Warkrime, Top Ten, *We're Gonna Fight* zine, White Cross, Berlin scene report.

#291/August '07. *MRR* 25th Anniversary Issue. Martin Sprouse, Tim Yohannon, No Slogan, Ruidosa Inmundicia, Chinese Telephones, Vaseline Children, Anti-System, Dave Roche, 6-page retrospective photo-spread, Kawakami/Disclose obituary, Brazil scene report.

#292/September '07. New Bloods, Chronic Seizure, Outraged, Geriatric Unit, Active Distribution, Gruk, The Mods, No Defences, The Fakes, Trashies Tour Report, Mexico scene report.

#293/October '07. Punk and Immigration Theme issue w/ interviews, articles, and stories. Anti-You, Loser Life, Political Asylum, Olympia scene report.

#294/November '07. The Hipshakes, Neverending Party, Punk & Immigration article, Finally Punk, La Lucha Para La Justicia en Guatemala, Leftover Crack, AOA.

#295/December '07. Surrender, What If Gods Lie?, The Crawlers, 2:20, The Joneses, Libertario Magazine, Bad Samaritans, Shrapnel, Untermensch.

#296/January '08. Hellshock, Mario Panciera, Anathema, The System, Eddy Current Suppression Ring, The Voids, Cinecyde, Kyklooppien Sukupuutto, Punch In The Face, BSA.

#297/February '08. Marie Kanger-Born, Thrillhouse Records, Contaminators, Oi Polloi, Obstruction, I Walk the Line, Utopia

#298/March '08. Best of 2007, Autistic Youth, White Lung, Karma Sutra, Clusterfuck, Sharon Cheslow, Slaughter of the Innocent.

#299/April '08. Government Warning, Age, Off With Their Heads, Guided Cradle, Go It Alone, Fy Fan, Daily Void, Hungarian Scene history.

#300/May '08. NorCal Punk Special: Fix My Head, Black Rainbow, Tank Crimes, Young Offenders, Church Police, Traditional Fools, Six Weeks/Short Fast & Loud, Ecoli.

#301/June '08. Underground Railroad to Candyland, Straightjacket Nation, Red Dons, Spectres, Dean Dirg, Kola, Los Violadores, the Sears, Tentacles of Destruction, Antibodies, Head on Collision.

#302/July '08. Giuda, Wasted Time, Reality, Sin Orden, Teenage Head, Antidote, La Urss, Canadian Rifle, Seasick, Israel & Japan scenes.

#303/August '08. Double Negative, Burnt Cross, Masapunk, Chicago Clitfest, Intifada, Nuclear Death Terror, Raw Power, Unlovables, Waste, Chaos In Tejas photospread, Houston and Grand Rapids scene reports.

#304/September '08. Raymond Pettibon, John Stabb of Government Issue, Cola Freaks, Measure [sa], The Press, XYX, Simply Saucer, Kulturkampf, Andy T, FPO, and Columbia scene report.

#305/October '08. Pierced Arrows, Bum Kon, Deep Sleep, Diente Perro, IRA, Legion of Parasites, Reality Control, Riot City Records, Stations, Test Patterns.

#306/November '08. Brain Handle, Assassins, Diodes (pt. 1), 97 Shiki, Black Dove, No Bunny, Shellshag, Sista Sekunden, Vivian Girls, Animals And Men.

#307/December '08. SOLD OUT!!! Sorry...

#308/January '09. Punks & Film Special with Target Video, Whatever Happened To Susan Jane, Cleveland's Screaming, Mondo Vision, After the Salad Days, You Weren't There, Botinada, Taqwacores, and more.

#309/February '09. Ooga Boogas,Mind Eraser, Cococoma, Extortion, Boyracer, Nixe, Mr. California, Deathcage, Squalora, Maniax, Null and Void, Think Fast.

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LETTERS

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Dear MRR—

I personally believe that food is medicine. A friend and I spent the coldest part of last winter staying indoors at night for about a month. We would listen to old records, draw pictures, and watch movies and crappy TV shows starring aging rock dudes playing games with crazy strippers—while throwing back refreshing orange juice spritzers with vodka that we made with love and care…I have since developed sensitivity to the grain in vodka and am now experimenting with rum in vodka's place.

The special thing about the cocktails was that they contained freshly juiced oranges from my backyard tree. Some think the tree is nearly 80 years old, and part of the original orange groves that covered the Outer Mission and Bernal Hill back around 1930. I figure the pollen does not get anymore local than my own backyard, right? I credit that to why I did not get sick at all last year, while those around me battled constant sinus woes. Daily consumption of the vitamins and pollens in the backyard bounty keeps my resistance to germs strong.

Eating seasonally also stimulates the body's natural defenses. I write this not only to boast about my immune system and fancy diet of fresh fruits in the California sunshine, but as an invitation to drop by and grab some free Valencia oranges this winter. We grow far more than we could possibly eat. They are mostly seedless, super sweet, and juicy, and haven't been treated with chemicals in the four and a half years I have lived in this house. Email me and I can put them out, or you can come and pick some.
—grenadionne@gmail.com

Dear MRR—

I'm pushing 40 and for the first time in 25 years I feel extremely out of touch with punk and all its subgenres. It's not because of my age. In fact, I still feel very much the same way I did when I got into punk back in the '80s. I don't fit in with my peers, I feel like I've got no future, the country is fucked and I just want to say fuck it to all my responsibilities. I'm unhappy and I'm angry. American hardcore isn't.

Record covers are stupid in-jokes that mean nothing to most people. Lyric sheets are filled with songs about eating tacos and record collecting. The "fuck you attitude" has made a little bit of a comeback, but politics are all but gone. Eight years of George W, and for some reason most of today's punks can't seem to find anything worse than emo kids to complain about.
Guess it's just one more thing to piss me off.
Peace,
—Ryan

Dear MRR—

This past year is beyond terrible. My good pal Mikhail "Mikka" Dryzlov, 24, has been found drowned in the Moika river in St. Petersburg on December 30. He went missing shortly after midnight on Boxing Day as he was walking home to his wife Kseniya and six-months old daugher Vasilisa. The circumstances are yet to be cleared. The desperate search didn't yield much of anything. Most likely he's been robbed and thrown into the river.

Mikka was a singer in local hardcore/grind band OPARYSH OSOZNAL (now defunct), keen photographer, active participant in local social movements such as Critical Mass, FNB etc., and simply the sweetest person around. I'm yet to understand what happened. but I know for sure that the world is now a dreary, terrible place if wonderful people like him meet such terrible fates.
He was buried at the Alexander Nevsky Church cemetery at the village of Ust-Izhora on January 4, 2009.
Condolences to the family.
—Szarapow.

Hey there MRR—

Thanks for the more or less to the point review of the Narsaak's *Prasina* 7" EP in #309, but I need to make a correction—the record came out on Thought Crime Records, not on Gastarbeiter. The 7" on Gastarbeiter came out a few years back and is totally raging. It can be ordered from the bands website (www.narsaak.de), for the *Prasina* 7" go here—www.thoughtcrimerecords.de
Cheers,
—Thomas

Hi There!—

I am so happy that *MRR* always reviews my zine. It makes me so darn happy. However I just wanted to let you know that every single review I get has the wrong contact info, so people aren't able to contact me. When *Ax Wound* got reviewed the website was written as axe-woundzine.com instead of the actual url, which is axwoundzine.com. In the most recent Feb. issue there is a review of my zine *Toxic Shock Girldom*, but the contact for me is lickmylit@gmail.com not *clit*. Thank you *so much* for making an amazing mag!
xoxoxo,
—Hannah Neurotica
lickmylit@gmail.com, www.axwoundzine.com

Dear MRR and readers—

To all those who get offended at Brace Belden's columns—please get a clue: Brace is an awesome writer and is to punk zines what *The Simpsons* are to mainstream TV—a much needed touch of humor, satire and provocation. If you can't laugh at such hilariously clever writing, the joke's on you. I for one am looking forward to what he will come up with next. Keep them coming, Brace.
Cheers,
—Alex Simon

MRR—

In issue #308, Cormy discussed music downloads and the idea that "music downloads are killing the scene" (usually followed the all important "*maaannn*"). This is a phrase that I've heard roughly one-gazillion times during the past few years. The statement is usually made by band members and labels (example: Ben Weasel) who remember how good record sales were before the Internet. Yes kiddies, at one point in time you could make a living off the punk rock industrial complex. (Cue the *Alice in Wonderland* music!) Maybe it wasn't the most lavish life they said, but it was better than working for *the man*. Was it too good to last, depending on your point of view? Yes, it was.

What if a good portion of the records that were sold in 1989 or 1993 were sold to people who thought the records sucked donkey balls after hearing them for the first time? If that is true, then those records sales were inflated because of hype—it wasn't talent, creativity, or artistic vision (ha!). These days, people can listen before they buy, and they aren't buying most of what they hear. Better take another look at the community college catalog before deciding that making punk records is your golden ticket to the good life.

The classic scenario that people envision is hoards of "evil fans" downloading a band's new release via illegal download sites and listening to the songs over and over again. The evil fans are singing along to every word, getting tattoos of the band's name and scoring points with their friends who want to know the name of this totally awesome new band that is being played. (Screeching tires sound!!!!) Uh, no. Don't be gullible.

A more likely scenario—People download your songs, listen to them once or twice before saying, "Someone please stab me in the ear with a pencil to stop the sound." At which point, the files are deleted or forgotten. (Don't cry for me, Argentinaaa!!!) How could this be possible?! Surely your band is only seconds away from being legendary…

"The Ramones suck!" You've heard it. I've heard it. Do I agree? Nope. To me, the Ramones first three albums are the punk equivalent of the *Star Wars* trilogy, which I also like, and I'm right about both. After that, the albums are hit and miss for me, but I would estimate that about 50 percent of the people I know, who listen to punk music, think the Ramones are "boring" or "too poppy" or "all the songs sound the same" etc... (Would someone help George Tabb up from the floor?) If the Ramones can't impress everyone, then your band or label has almost no chance.

That means plenty of people who download your songs, legally or not, don't like the music after hearing it. Fear not, little grasshopper, there's a very good chance that I hate your music too! Yes, I too am surprised that metal bands and pop bands pretending to be punk are selling fewer records these days. I have no idea why!

Years ago, people bought a lot of music based on recommendations from friends, record store clerks, and zine reviews. You had to buy a record before finding out it was awful, which led to higher sales while also increasing my anger level at the same time. Having been burned so many times over the years by awful music, I refuse to buy a record if I can't hear at least one song from the label's site, band's page, online radio show, etc. Those illegal download sites aren't my bag.

That's not so say those recommendations were wrong, actually, they were, but people have such varied tastes that it's impossible to predict how a person will react to music—even to a record that by any reasonable standard is a classic. People are now finding their own classic records by listening to downloads first and buying music second. Since most of the music doesn't impress people, the buying part of that equation has dropped off.

Quick example: A certain label owner, who shall go unnamed (actually I can't remember the name of the label), was on a discussion board complaining about a new release being posted to an illegal download site. He was going on and on about how good the band was, and that the release wasn't selling because everyone was getting it for free. Total bullshit. The band's prior release (I can remember the band name but won't say it to spare their sensitive feelings) ended up in my hands due to a promotion that was being run by the label, so I got the album for free. And it sucked. And I gave it away. People may have been downloading the new release, but they probably didn't get through even one song before deleting all of it. No one is going to pay you for an "experience" like that.

What's the answer? Keep complaining about downloads and pray to Jesus for help, of course! Surely, that will work. Or you could press fewer copies of vinyl to break even without selling thousands of records. Or you could make a few dozen tapes instead of dropping money on vinyl. (Sure, tapes don't last as long as records, but no one will remember your band in six months anyway). However, both of these options will significantly decrease your odds of becoming a punk rock millionaire.

— Buzz Donothing
buzz_donothing@yahoo.com

PANACEA s/t lp

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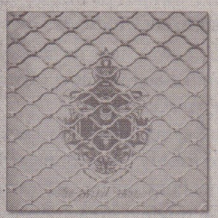

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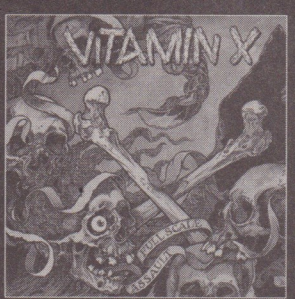

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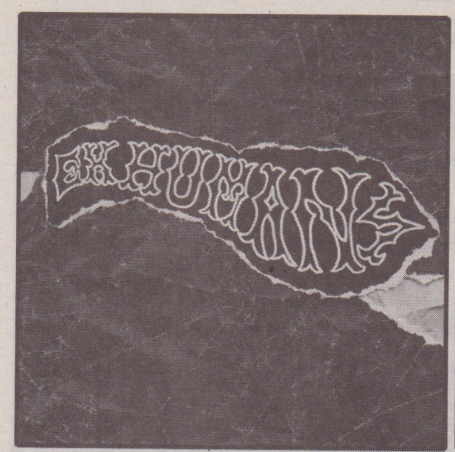

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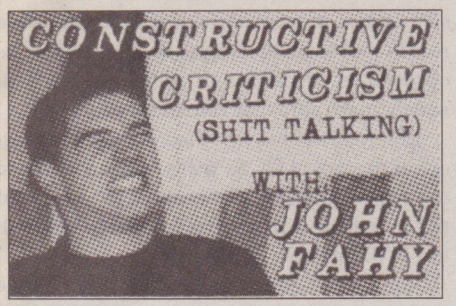


1. Dispatches from This Is For You Fest 2008

So even though this is the health issue, I have to deviate big time and start things off by declaring that the Florida hardcore scene fucking rules right now. I'm writing this a few days after This Is For You Fest was held for the first time in Orlando and under a new regime, and Florida bands were all over that shit, ruling everybody's asses and genitalia.

This Is For You is a three-day hardcore fest that was started a few years back in Daytona by a guy named Billy, and has been a decent mix of somewhat jock-core and good time DIY hardcore with some Florida bands and a lot of touring bands. Until this year, the fest was run by Billy and friends in Daytona, but this time Adrian (formerly of Orlando's GOMEK, currently doing time in HELLDISTORT) and some kids got the fest together at the Black Box Collective—a new warehouse-like venue in downtown Orlando that sits on a fenced-in piece of land with a fucking skate ramp and plenty of room for distros to set up outside.

Also outside in the lot with distros was the vegan hot dog cart, which made leaving the fest for any length of time almost totally unnecessary. I was not into the Old-Spice-hardcore-jock vibe at previous TIFY Fests, and that was pretty much totally absent this year, which rules. Good-fucking-job to Adrian and the Orlando punks and hardcores for making the fest an overall success. Now let's talk about some highlights…

Tampa's CONTROL DE ESTADO was the first band to play on day one, and they killed. They just added a new guitarist, played the fest in California, and put out a record on the IFB label that is easily their best shit yet.

DIVISIONS, also from Tampa (and talked about relentlessly by me), played a set that took everybody aback. Justin's lower face was covered in blood from the first song onward and they played songs from the demo, EP, and a couple of new ones that were as heavy, pissed and vicious as anything they've ever done. Luckily for others further up the east coast, DIVISIONS is planning a tour in the late winter/spring to New York and back.

Sadly, CULT RITUAL did not complete the Tampa bands' trifecta, and while they were billed to play, they didn't for whatever reason. CULT RITUAL gets mentioned because no Florida hardcore discussion is really complete without them in there somewhere. When the hell is their next record coming out, anyway?

Gainesville, Orlando and Miami bands also destroyed at the fest. Two bands everyone was stoked to see were HELLDISTORT and WORLDS, both of which have former GOMEK members. HELLDISTORT sounds like what the name implies, and kids were losing it for them. WORLDS played one of the best sets of the fest, and you could tell even though they just started and have only a demo out that this is a band to make kids go apeshit.

WORLDS plays blistering, heavy grind and has Spinach, formerly of ASSUCK, on vocals, and I think the drummer from RELIGIOUS AS FUCK? RELIGIOUS AS FUCK played the same day, and they just released their best, most thrashy shit to date on a split with Miami's MEHKAGO N.T., who played day three (I had to leave before I could see them). MEHKAGO N.T. plays heavy crust riffs with CRO-MAGS intensity, are totally unfuckwithable, and all of their records should be got. Easily one of the best, most original Florida acts around right now. The new split with RELIGIOUS is available from No Idea Records.

Unfortunately, RELIGIOUS AS FUCK's cousin-band DEAD FRIENDS did not get to play the fest. DEAD FRIENDS is one of the most atypical and best FL bands around right now, have some shit out on No Idea, along with an EP on IFB/Drugged Conscience/ Vinyl Rites, and a couple of tapes. The band plays a little poppy and catchy, a little ugly and disturbing, but bursting with energy throughout it all. Also on the second day, my band MERKIT got to play, and it was a lot of fucking fun.

So now I guess we have to give the out-of-state bands some credit. POSITIVE NOISE from Grand Rapids, Michigan played before my band's set, and I was stoked because kids were so amped from P.N.'s WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?-meets-LOCKJAW-style, pissed-and-positive hardcore. RIPSHIT from Connecticut has the same vibe: pissed hardcore that is uplifting.

On day two, HELLKONTROL from Baton Rouge played their manic, fast, noisy, distorted shit that is a fucking blast to see live. RATIONAL ANIMALS from Rochester are one of my favorite bands around right now—BLACK FLAG guitar weirdness over driving, catchy hardcore songs and wild, eccentric-sounding vocals—awesome fucking band. DRAIZE from Massachusetts played some heavy, mean hardcore. They broke out some borderline-tough-guy-breakdown parts but then saved the day by returning to rabidly fast, vicious riffs.

I HATE THIS from New Jersey was a big surprise: insane, desperate-sounding vocals over heavy, mean, fast hardcore with some tinges of youth crew. D.C.'s COKE BUST does some fucking blown out youth crew with powerviolent intensity, and at the fest they played one of the most energetic sets. The best I'd ever seen from them.

Overall, it was just fucking sick to see so many awesome kids and bands from all over the country—kids who are really doing something about DIY hardcore in their towns and cities. Florida hardcore is healthy, motherfuckers! Now onto some kind of appropriate subject matter…

2. BIG FUN - "TEENAGE SUICIDE"

I am pretty lucky to not have any real substantial health problems, but I've been around a fucking lot of death. Lately, suicide has come up in discussions with some friends, and whether it should be an accepted act without hysteria surrounding it. I've said so many times how a lot of everyday people should kill themselves, but the real people that I care about, punks and so forth, taking the ultimate control over their lives—that discussion is a little harder.

A friend of mine's mother died recently. She was old, her heart was weak, and her blood had started to clot. She took medicine, spent money and all she got were side-effects (that prompted more medicine given by doctors and money taken by doctors) and extra time to suffer. Finally, she spoke to her children and asked, "Can I just stop trying?" That is courageous. It was more courageous of her children to accept

it.

After my mom died, my Dad and I had a lot of talks about death and mourning and so on. He told me—and I agreed—that he thought mourning is a totally selfish, bullshit thing that people do, him included. It's false, because people aren't really mourning the deceased's loss of life—they're mourning their loss of a wife/friend/mother, etc.

I didn't often cry about my mother thinking of that next tasty breakfast that she missed out on, I cried for my own loss of someone I was close to. So when my Dad died, all I thought about was our conversations. My dad was terrified of getting old, weak and helpless. He also never completely recovered from my Mom's death. So when he died suddenly from instant heart failure while sitting in a chair in the blink of an eye, one of my first thoughts was, "Good for him, he would have wanted it that way."

Younger friends of mine talking about suicide, though—or control over their own lives—makes me nervous. I think the argument that suicide is an acceptable thing for people who have no enjoyment of life and no prospects of things getting better sounds good in theory. But any young kid whose really talking about it seriously needs to think about a couple of things first.

So much of life's pain is temporary. I know so many kids who are mostly miserable throughout the year, but then they tour with their punk bands and it's the best shit in the world, it's epic and unforgettable. Mental health issues can be helped. Some people hate to be medicated, or think medicating is unnatural or whatever, but for people to not give it a fair shot is fucking stupid.

A lot of pain can be alleviated. It would be stupid of me not to wear glasses just because I didn't like the idea of needing help to see. I, just like a lot of people, think it sucks that everybody's on anti-depressants now because they're not happy with situations in their lives and just don't want or know how to change it—but some people just plain fucking need those pills because something's wrong. Also, if the pain of living is so bad, keep doing it because it's the pain-in-the-ass thing to do. Giving up is not punk. Don't kill yourself—tell others to.

Finally, don't underestimate yourself. Many, many fucking punks I know have some fucking weird head issues—that's why we're punks. A lot of times your just being around gives your friends some sense of being all right, and the world being fucked, which it is. Don't let other people down. A lot of times you don't know what you are to someone else. All you can think of is your own toiling, failing and neuroses. Think of all the angles, because if you're wrong, it's over. And all opportunities and chances are fucked.

ENDNOTES:

1. RATIONAL ANIMALS EPs from Feral Kid Records, Ebullition and so on. RELIGIOUS AS FUCK and MEHKAGO N.T. shit from Vinyl Rites and No Idea. WORLDS demos from Drugged Conscience (5140 Tamarind Ridge Drive Naples, FL 34109 USA; burnx naples@yahoo.com). DIVISIONS EPs from *me*: John Fahy/15011 lakeside view drive/apt. 2402/Fort Myers/ FL/33919. CONTROL DE ESTADO records from ifbrecords.com or architeuthis @com cast.net. That's all the info I have in front of me right now.

2. Motherfuckers seem to enjoy the horror zine. Kids need to let me know about more obscure, weird, disturbing movies! No cheesy shit! See my address above or email me: fahy_john@hotmail.com.

3. Noisy hardcore bands: send me your demos! Addresses above.

4. Good-fucking-job to the kids doing the demo reviews lately in *MRR*.

5. I guess we'll wait and see what Obama's going to do about the Israeli/Palestinian situation. Be prepared for disappointment.

6. Thanks to everyone that's sent me mail/ordered records and zines from the last few issues. Up all of the fucking punks.

ALL FOREIGN JUNK

It's the health issue.

My views are fairly succinct.

Punk health seems to split between the senseless (guzzling SSRI's with alcohol, eating someone out in a dumpster, shooting up with toilet water), the sensible/hippy (natural herb remedies, menstruation devices made from banana leaf) and the ethical decisions that may not be so healthy for the person making them (veganism), but attempt to integrate philosophy and environmental concerns with the individual's health.

Talking about punk health is to either say punks need to make more careful health decisions (don't tattoo yourself with the same needle that Johnny Vomit just did), or it is to say that you agree with or support current hippy trends (don't wear sunscreen, etc.).

Or, if you are educated in the area, you could possibly have a well-reasoned argument that can actually refute principals of conventional medicine in a new and interesting way.

I don't have anything new to offer in these areas, so I'd say if you're looking for health advice, don't read columns about punk records. Talk to educated people as opposed to ethically motivated people. That's the one thing I've learned from being an unhealthy punk. Attempting to do what may be ethically sound or morally conscious may be an unhealthy or detrimental decision for your body. Make decisions based on contact with people who have reason and logic backing their information, as opposed to ideologies or opinions—but ultimately make sure that you know yourself.

Ron Asheton has just died of "natural causes" at the age of 60. So that's where I'd like to end my discussion about health and records for this month, because anything I discuss here will live in the shadow of this news.

Ron played guitar on *Funhouse*. Pour a little lysergic in the gutter and crank "LA Blues" 'til your ears bleed. Then see an ear doctor.

If you play music with a bit of grit and rawness to it, or if you write a fanzine that loosely covers the same sonic territory, and you *don't* live in the US, Japan or Sweden, get in touch. My address is DANIEL STEWART: PO BOX 239 NORTH CARLTON VICTORIA 3054 AUSTRALIA. If you'd like to email me, try distortheworld@gmail.com. All hail South East Asian punk.

Last summer Burt got ringworm and scabies at the same time.

When he told me I just laughed at the absurd punkness of it. I've never had scabies, but I feel like it's one of those supremely punk problems. Like on tour when we rolled into town and found the house we were playing emptied of furniture.

"We burned the couches last night."

"Whoa, why?"

"Scabies."

We all nodded our heads solemnly. Unconsciously beginning to scratch our arms, or rubbing the edge of one shoe against the other leg. We hugged our friends, but carefully, remembering every time our skin met their skin, trying not to think about it… but thinking of it all the same.

Then we drank around the blackened remnants of the bonfire, and later slept fitfully in the bare rooms with grime outlines where the

couches used to be.

Every tour it was a different house, but the rituals were the same.

I've had and heard about my fair share of tour ailments—both illness and injury—but none so sadly out-of-control and preventable as Burt's.

Burt is not the cleanliest of dudes. His once white shirts are the color of smog, and his previously black clothes have all turned a sickly olive or a rich reddened brown. But in general he takes care of himself. His is not a self-destructive neglect, but a general aversion to clothes washing or owning enough clothes to have to decide what to wear. I like to call him a house crusty, or apartment hobo.

Even being as grimy a dude as I know him to be, it still seemed crazily impossible to get both ringworm and scabies at the same time. I made him walk me through it, step by itchy step.

In his estimation the problems began before he ever left on tour.

"Getting ready to leave. I had so much to do. I wasn't showering. I wore the same underpants for a week and a half. I'm sure that was a bit of a factor."

He didn't worry about the itching at first. Like I explained, he's a generally grimy dude, so he's used to some itching.

"Everybody itches. It didn't seem like a big deal. But it got worse. I woke up at night and couldn't go back to sleep. I'd just scratch and scratch"

It was two weeks of constant itching before he couldn't take it anymore. The turning point came when it made its way onto his "junk."

He'd woken up at 5 a.m. and tried showering to help ease the itching. But it didn't work. He called around to find a free clinic, but no one could see him. So, he had the band take him to the emergency room.

"I said, 'it itches' and she had me drop trou. She glanced me over and said. 'You probably just have jock itch." (aka Ringworm; aka Tinea Cruris; aka punk itch)

"She prescribed pills and ointment and told me to wash thoroughly twice a day. So, I had to try to shower twice a day at weird punk houses, and sadly the next string of houses we stayed at only had tubs. I spent a lot of awkward time crouched over in these tubs washing my groin. It fucking sucked, but we did get to make a lot of 'there's a fungus among us' jokes."

The additional thing Burt had to do to get rid of the itching for good? Boil his underpants. Which seemed easy enough to arrange since they were staying with good friends. But when Burt asked if he could do some panty boiling on their stove the answer was an unequivocal "No way!"

He grimed through another night in his ringworm underpants, and the next day, in the next city, he decided to go for it and boil them while his hosts were away at work.

"I only had a small pot, so I had to boil all my underpants and a couple shirts in batches. My clothes hadn't been washed in, well, ranging from two weeks to a year. I didn't add more water between batches so the water got all low and black. I singed some of the clothes a little bit."

No one came home from work to find Burt making dirt soup and burning his clothes on their stove. He got it done, and presumably killed the fungi living there.

Two weeks later and he had finished the anti-ringworm regimen. During that time he had gathered a vast array of anti-ringworm accessories: special soap, a loofah, tea tree oil, and some boxers. But he was still itching. Bad. Some of the redness had gone away, and it seemed to have retreated, but it was not getting less itchy. Luckily, they had a few days off in his hometown so he could see a doctor he knew and get things sorted out properly

"I went in and said, 'Hello sir, I'm having a problem with my penis.' He examined me and said, 'Let's just think about this.' We spent a while comparing my junk to pictures and realized it looked just like scabies. We deduced I had killed the ringworm, but had let the scabies take over.

Burt was given a cream to apply over his whole body and leave on overnight. Unlike the old days of being forced to use the harsh foul-smelling Lindane, he was prescribed a mild scentless cream called Premethrine. He was warned that even with the treatment done he would itch for another month, but he would no longer be contagious.

"I want to clear up some misapprehensions it seems most people have about scabies. It's not that bad, and it's harder to pass on than everyone seems to think. According to my doctor you have to 'share clothes or naked hug someone' to pass it. I spent eight weeks in a hot van with my band, and no one else got it.

"I've changed my habits a little. I mean, we all want to be crustier than the next dude, but I change and wash my underwear more often now. I'm also more likely to go to the doctor now; these are the kinds of things that I always struggled to take care of with a home remedy. I'm all about home remedies, but I think this is a situation where you want to have 'the man' give you a chemical.

For home remedies Burt says the tea tree oil helped alleviate some of the symptoms, but it didn't come close to any kind of cure.

"Couple tips for those with scabies: hot showers are no good! It encourages them to thrive. As for killing them on your clothes, boiling works—but you should iron them too to be extra sure. And crusty dudes particularly: change your underpants dude, please."

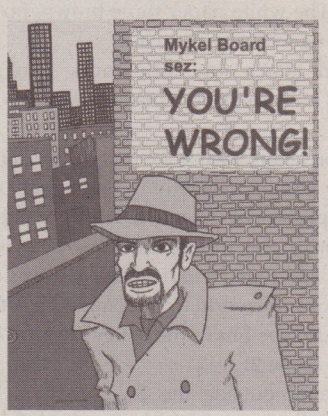
Both Ringworm and scabies are things the punks seem particularly prone to: we live and tour in filth, shower less frequently, wear tight pants, and tend to wait for our ailments to cross the last possible line before we seek treatment.

The kicker? Right before Burt left on tour, he told a friend about his slight itchiness. They said, "Dude you probably have ringworm, take care of that shit before it gets out of hand."

Dear the punks: Listen to your friends, change your underpants, quit putting off taking care of shit you are hoping will just go away but know won't, and please take care of yourself so next summer I won't show up to your empty house wondering if I should risk hugging you.

It is now be perfectly safe to naked hug Burt, but for at least a few people who read this, the following will be true: he boiled his ringworm scabies underpants on your stove, in your only pot.

Send lists of proven home remedies for scabies and Polaroids of your nasty rashes to: Ariel Awesome PO Box 301 Berkeley, CA 94701. Electronic mail to: arielawesome @gmail.com



The phrase "healthy lifestyle" is a mask for concealing phobic maneuvers aimed at avoiding the dangers of life, both real and imaginary, especially the temptations of drugs and sex. —Thomas Szasz

Scene 1:

It's a pug. Like the obnoxious little bug-eyed runt in *Men In Black*. This one's not black. It's yellow. Piss colored... not a Guinness piss... a Bud Lite.

Attached to one of those expanding leashes, it meanders across the sidewalk, tripping up students, office workers, and anyone else who uses the sidewalk to actually go someplace, rather than sniff around trying to find a place to shit. At the other end of the leash is a young woman. She wears a long black coat. The ends of a brown scarf show over her back next to the perfectly cut edge of her black hair. On her head, is a white furry bell. Not an actual ringing bell, but a bell-shaped hat that would do DEVO proud.

That's all I can see of the girl. Of the dog, I can see more... full view. Sniffing garbage, staircase edges, the shoes of passing pedestrians. Its

little chopped-off tail sticks straight into the air. I can see its gray-brown sphincter. An anal stargate. Closed up tight. Clean as a Disney movie.

But wait—there's a little pressure. A tiny bulge in that chocolate spiral. The pointed tip of an emerging turd. The dog stops and squats. There on the sidewalk, as if squeezed from a Crest tube, first one, then the other: two perfect turds, the second slightly shorter than the first.

The woman removes a plastic bag from the leash end. She puts her hand inside, turns the bag inside out, wearing it like a glove. Then, she scoops up the two brown sausages, unfolds the plastic around them, ties the bag shut, and drops it in a litter bin. That's not very interesting.

What *is* interesting is, when the dog stands up, its tiny little anus is still perfectly tight, and clean. Just like new. After *I* take a shit, I spend half a roll of toilet paper cleaning up—sometimes more—depending on the beer brand of the previous night. Sometimes I need to wipe up my back and down my legs. Ripping the paper, wiping up, down, front-to-back, back-to-front. The white paper turns brown, no matter where its whiteness touches.

And here's this little mutt, two perfect pieces, anus clean as Whistler's Mother. It's not fair.

Then again, there's something special in that act of wiping. Something satisfying, like an accomplishment. The outside of my body covered with the inside, like my heart on my sleeve, controlled and made nasally presentable to the outside world by rubbing with soft white paper. Maybe I have the better life after all.

Cut to scene 2:

I stand outside the St. Barnaby's Middle School playground. It's the first warm day. The youngsters have shed their heavy coats and run back and forth teasing and testing each other. In one corner, several skinny guys in blue jeans flip a hacky sack back and forth: Adidas-to-Nike-to-Nike. Right in front of me. A group of girls in pleated dresses huddle over a cell phone, backs to the oblivious teacher.

One youngster, skin the color of chocolate milk, stands against the school wall. He's the only one wearing shorts. His thin yet adolescently muscular legs disappear appetizingly into his silver shorts. He puts one leg in front of the other, as if posing for a Greek sculpture. I imagine the callipygian youth naked, turning. I imagine his sphincter, much-wiped, but probably eternally closed to me. I imagine... Uh oh.

There, on the other side of the street—this NYU jock: six and a half feet tall, shoulders out to here. Crewcut. Xanthrocroid. A square, hairless face. Some football team barely visible on his hooded sweatshirt. I can see an O and a piece of another letter. Trojans? Warriors? Gorlocks? I can't tell.

His simian right arm drapes over a girl's shoulder. She's half his height. Long "blond" hair—tits as frontal as his shoulders are side. She looks up into the guy's eyes as if he's the only human in the world. In profile, I see Mr. Muscle look down at her. The shadow from his baseball hat hides his eyes, but I can imagine their practiced blueness, penetrating the otherwise empty brain of his big-boobed girlfriend. He bends down. Kisses her lightly on the forehead. Yuck. That's sick.

The meat:

This is the *health* issue of *MRR*. I expect most columnists will focus on the sorry state of healthcare in America—or on their own particular health problems. We've got some ill amongst us. Maybe George Tabb will talk about his own problems. That is, if he can stop talking about me. (I love it, of course!)

There are three main concepts of *disease:*

ONE: The Western version says disease is like war. An army (of cancer cells, bacteria, viruses) invades. The job of the doctor is to kill or repel the invading army. Drugs and surgery are the weapons. If you have the flu, for example, it's caused by a flu virus. If you kill the virus, you get rid of the flu. The more you kill, the healthier you are.

TWO: The Eastern version of disease says disease is like juggling. As long as everything balances, it works. But if the balance is off, you drop your balls. If you have the flu, for example, it is because an imbalance in your body allows the flu virus to have a bad effect. There are always viruses and bacteria in the air, on the land, in water. Some people get sick, others don't. The reason? You get sick because your body is out of balance. In that weakened state, the flu bug can take over. The job of the doctor is to restore the body's balance. They use herbs, pressure, needles and food to restore that balance.

THREE: In America, "healthy" and "sick" have replaced "sin" and "virtue" as ways to judge others. Drinking too much, eating too much, homosexuality, gambling, "too much" everyday sex, even "over-shopping." These are *sick* in America in 2009. They are no longer "sins." No longer "bad."

In Spanish, you *tiene* (have) sickness—in English, we *are* sick. *Disease* of new, like *sin* of old, defines the individual: *I am an alcoholic.* You are not what you eat. You are your sickness.

In the past, I've ranted against this definition. I've stood outside America's linguistic gates, banging my hair-plugged head against the lock, demanding change inside—a new way of speaking—a way that allows people just *to be*, rather than *to be sick*. For some unimaginable reason, the linguistic gates, like that little colored guy's much-wiped sphincter, never open for me. So I'll try another stratagem.

I'll accept your definition. You got it. No sin or virtue. No good or bad—just *sick* or *healthy*. But my kind of sickness is Eastern sickness. An imbalance: a tilt, like the leaning tower of Pisa. It's not an invading army. It doesn't need surgery to cut something out. It doesn't need poisons to kill the invaders. It needs a gentle tug the other way, a pull back to equilibrium. Let's take a look at what's sick—and what isn't.

RULE ONE: Nothing that occurs in your mind is sick. Your mind is where you can do *anything*. You *should* do anything. It is the center of freedom, a test zone for all ideas. The wildest things are possible here, with *no repercussions*. Put a bullet through some evangelist's head in real life, you're outta here! But do it in your mind, and you're free. *Nobody knows*!

RULE TWO: This kind of freedom is available to anyone. Every prisoner in every cell in the world has this freedom. It is healthy. Mental freedom is healthy.

Included in this rule is knowledge that some things should remain in your mind. You learn to see them in your mind, smell them in your mind, do them in your mind and then let them go. A fantasy about ripping through your high school class with an AK47 is healthy. Actually doing it is not.

RULE THREE: Outside your own mind you can lose your balance and begin to tilt on the slippery slope of disease. And it is *dis-ease*. Your body feels uncomfortable. You aren't satisfied with life in your mind. You're worried about life in other people's mind. You're worried about what *they* think—or worse—what *they* think of *you*. You have something to prove.

"I'm getting laid and you're not," is what you have to prove to the guy next to you. So you drape your arm around your big-boobed catch and mark your territory with a kiss to the forehead.

You need to show you possess this girl. You need to keep her in your hand. She might run. You might be alone. Your fears push you off balance. You become sick.

What else is sick?

RULE FOUR: Acting immorally in the world—that's sick. I'm not talking about Christian morality. That says that anything that makes your body feel good is bad. Or there's the new Christian morality that says anything that makes your body feel good is "unhealthy." I'm talking about *human* morality. A morality that says anything that contributes to the pain of others is ba... er... sick. Buying sweatshop shoes that create the pain of poverty—that pushes the world off balance. That's sick. Withholding money from the bum on the corner when you're going to use it to download some crust punk song from iTunes—this guy's starving in front of you. That's sick. Becoming a temp-lez, so your politics will look right to your fellow students before you find Mr. Corporate Right and move to the 'burbs to drop puppies. That's sick.

SO: Jerking off to fantasies of sucking the eyeballs out of severed baby heads is *not* sick. Dreams of wallowing in entrails pulled through the hairless vaginae of 10-year-old daughters of British aristocracy are *not* sick. Holding hands with your girlfriend while waiting to try on a pair of Nikes—that's *really* sick.

ENDNOTES: [email subscribers (god@mykelboard.com) or website viewers (www.mykelboard.com) will get live links and a chance to comment on the column]

> *Celebrities go free dept:* No, I'm not talking about the Lillo Brancato Jr. murder trial. I'm talking about another case.

Most of America knows that Rush Limbaugh was caught with a bottle of Viagra prescribed for someone else. It was at US customs on a return trip from the Dominican Republic. I guess Rush and I have similar tastes in colored girls. Unfortunately for Radioland, Rush will not have to face charges for the illegally-possessed drugs. The local DA (or the feds, I'm not sure which) has decided not to pursue the case.

> *Precious dept:* Keith Dobson sent me a brochure of *Precious Gifts from the Redwoods*. It lists all those great things (like vases and "three-tier modern bowls") that you can buy from the deforested redwood trees. Now that's appreciating nature: cut it down and put it on your home shelf. Yowsah!

> *Health Nazis dept:* I subscribe to *Nutrition Action Newsletter*, published by The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). The newsletter shows lots of scams Big Food uses to make you think the shit they're selling is "healthy." The only thing I dislike about the publication is that it calls especially unhealthy food "food porn." That gives porn a bad name.

But, I was dismayed to receive a mass emailing from CSPI calling for a government ban on *Sparks*! That beer/Red Bull mix is as logical as spaghetti and tomato sauce. I mean, the only *disadvantage* to getting drunk is that you can't stay awake to enjoy it. Sparks solves the problem.

Sleazier than a letter-writing campaign, CSPI is asking for people to send them "bad experiences from mixing Red Bull with alcohol." How about the *good* experiences? How about the people who *didn't* fall asleep at the wheel when they were drunk? How about the folks who *could* keep their eyes open to enjoy the sex that their drunken conquest got them? How about *those* experiences?

Let's show 'em! Send them your good experiences with Red Bull/booze mixes, and your thoughts on this ban. Email Carol Walsh at: cwalsh@cspinet.org. Tell her that you think banning Sparks is *sick*!

> *Real DIY dept:* So the banks and auto execs get bailouts from the government. Where's my cut?

That's what the factory workers at Republic Windows & Doors in Chicago wanted to know. The factory gave them three days notice, then fired everybody and tried to shut down.

Hang on!

The union guys on the floor said no: they sat down and took the place over. Even though I'm not a big fan of *work*, it's nice to see people *doing* things instead of taking it on the chin. I only wish New Yorkers had the balls to do something when it hits them—like when the transit fares go up. The mayor has 36 billion dollars, and they're raising *my* fare to cover a gap of less than 1/36 that. Yo mayor, bail *me* out!

Meanwhile, I'll sit in on the subway platform floor. Gonna join me?

> Church and State Dept: The government of our nation's capital gives $12 million to Central Union Mission for a homeless shelter. Sounds good, huh? Well, the shelter requires church attendance, or they throw you back on the street. One man was too ill to go to the religious services. They kicked him out—to sleep on the streets. That's sick.

> *Even in New York and Berkeley Dept:* Two bastions of liberal free speech? Yeah right.

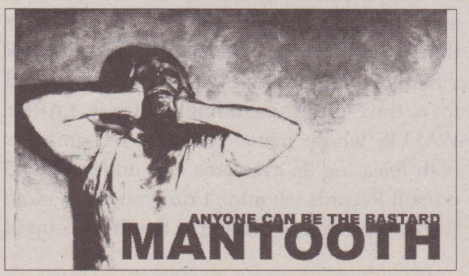
In New York, city officials ordered Cooper Union College to remove Picasso's portrait of Joseph Stalin from their facade. The banner was part of an exhibition by the artist Lene Berg. Complaints from the local Ukrainian community brought the ban. They thought the banner "seemed to promote Stalin." We wouldn't want pictures of Stalin, would we? He was against free speech.

In Berkeley, four posters were banned from display at the city-run Addison Street Windows Gallery. The posters were banned because they contained images of guns. Oh yeah, the name of the exhibition was *Art of Democracy*. Yeah, right.

> *Keep them (and me) coming dept:* Yeah, keep sending me those homemade porno vids! I love 'em. I'm still at POB 137, Prince St. Station, New York NY 10012.

Year-end Top Ten:

1. Trinidad Wine-ing
2. Trinidad Lime-ing
3. WORLD WAR IX
4. KISSY KAMEKAZI
5. BLACKOUT SHOPPERS
6. ENDANGERED FECES
7. TRIGGER EFFECT (Canada)
8. SUCIEDAD DISCRIMINAD (Mexico)
9. @PATIA NO (Venezuela)
10. ANTI-EVERYTHING (Trinidad)



Greg Mantooth's Top Five Health-Related Punk Songs

1) Aus Rotten – "AIDS": Off the sickest record Havoc Records ever put out, this song is constantly playing in my head. It's like there's a fucking DJ in my iBrain podcasting it through my mouth. It takes great strength and determination and courage to not scream at coworkers and loved ones, "*The government has fucked us—what a big surprise—welcome to the human race where everybody dies.*"

This song literally blew the lid off my teenage ass when I first heard it. I often cite it as the root of my "balls out" attitude towards life and my addiction to prescription Anarchy. I remember bringing the subject matter up at dinner, telling my family that America made this virus and that they also have the cure. You know what they thought of that? Nothing. Because they're fucking sheep. So I picked up my meat loaf and threw it at the wall signifying my smackdown of their belief system. I stormed off to my bedroom and punched walls to the *Fuck Nazi Sympathy* 7".

I've always been pretty fascinated with conspiracy theories regarding governments/diseases. My favorite aspect of the *Aliens* storyline is that Earth governments are in cahoots with the Weyland-Yutani Corporation to smuggle Aliens onto the earth to control the populace. Of course, things don't go as they planned as it results in a whole lot of motherfuckers getting burned by acid and aliens bursting out of chests.

At some point I tried to synthesize my love for both science fiction and Aus Rotten when I wrote some lyrics for an imaginary band I had about governments infecting the world with Aliens. It was called "A.L.I.E.N.S." and the lyrics were pretty much exactly the same as AIDS except about aliens. If anyone reading this would like to start a band that sounds like Aus Rotten and changes all the lyrics (slightly) to be about the *Aliens* comic books and novels, I'm still game (gregory.mantooth@gmail.com).

2) Circle Jerks – "World Up My Ass": Before you put anything up your ass, you should really make sure it has a tapered base. You run the risk of having it get sucked up there and causing a lot of damage.

3) Dead Kennedys – "Ill in the Head": Actually, this song kind of sucks.

4) Dead Kennedys – "Terminal Preppie": Second only to Aliens, the biggest health threat to punks are preppies. Not only are they stupid and go to college only to drink, major in business, and fuck, but it's too easy for any respectable freak punk to succumb to their influence. As they say, the list is millions long.

Now some of you may be thinking that being a "preppie" isn't a proper medical problem. Well, are you a fucking doctor? Have you taken the Hippocratic Oath? How the fuck do

you know? I suppose you read somewhere on Wikipedia that being a preppie is fine and good and that I should just chill out. Allow me to produce some facts that you might not know since you don't listen to the Dead Kennedys:

Preppies block out thinking (it won't get them ahead).

They live in dorms and show-off by pools (dorms and pools are filled with germs).

Someday they'll have boats (boats are dangerous).

John Belushi is their collective hero.

Think about the latter for a second. John Belushi was rumored to be a huge fan of punk rock. Quite frankly I'm too tired to try to draw a connection between preppies, John Belushi, punk, illness, and Aliens, so if anyone out there wants to let me know what they come up with, please email me and we'll start a band about it (gregory. mantooth @ gmail. com).

5) Warzone Womyn – "Mercury Treat-ment": It might not be fair and balanced to pick a song from a band I was in, especially considering that it's not really one of my favorite songs about a health-related topic. Even more so, the lyrics were kind of pieced together last minute before recording. When asked what the song is about, I usually shrug my shoulders and say, "I dunno, syphilis or something."

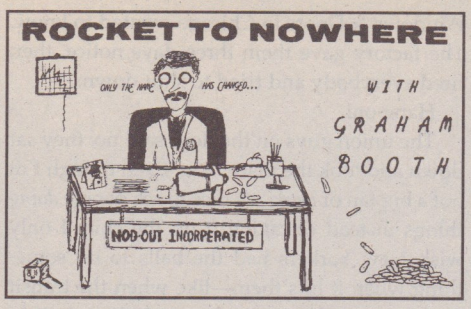
What do I know about syphilis? Not much admittedly, aside from the fact that people used to huff mercury fumes to cure themselves. Sounds pretty sick, huh? Well that's what you have to write songs about when you're in a sick band. You have to write songs that make people fucking sick to their stomachs—or terribly depressing anthems that make them want to kill themselves.

When I first started writing this I intended to come up with ten punk songs about being sick. Halfway through writing it, I started puking and shitting uncontrollably and spent about 36 hours in a hospital hooked up to an IV. I shit the bed approximately four times over the course of four days.

I changed gears and began dictating my column over the phone to my administrative assistant Jules (big thanks to Jules for writing this for me while I'm incapacitated, even though he doesn't know I write a column and is under the impression that this is a report for the board of directors). It turned into a violent poem about my deteriorating bowels and the old man I shared a room with who refused to wear his hospital gown. He was covered in strange, bulbous growths.

Upon review I became enraged for no reason (I found out later that they had been giving me steroids) and scrapped that whole piece. The third version is what you have just read and I apologize if there are any incoherencies therein.

I'm serious about the bands. Email me: gregory.mantooth@gmail.com



HI! I hope you like random, because that's what I have for you this month! I just got back from Chicago and have a bagful of records I picked up. Yay stories...

My first record expedition in Chicago was December 29, 2008. I'd convinced a notorious Chicago collector recluse to meet me in Alsip at thee fuggin' Double Tree Hotel! Little did I know I would have to drive through a torrential downpour to get there. Freaky stuff. *Yikes!* A 9 a.m. Crust Fest ensued. I don't really know why I do it to myself, but I managed to accumulate an impressive stack (less impressive once privy to its contents).

Still, there were a few hot spots. The main objects of my affection came out of a magic box. Dunno what was up with the dudes (actual dudes—unlike the rest of the geriatrics filling the room), since they had a bunch of overpriced PINK FLOYD and ZEP on the table. They also had an unmarked box of LPs on the floor under the table. I figured it must be more of the same, and cringed to think what they might charge me for the original PINK FAIRIES *Kings of Oblivion* LP or the second JOBRIATH LP.

Then I hit the first of the laminated covers. '70s Brit rawk abound, I nabbed a couple before I hit the obvious jaw dropper... JERUSALEM's 1972 self-titled debut LP on the UK Deram label, sporting its beautiful laminated gatefold cover. Yoink! "So how much are these LPs on the floor?" $5 each. *Sold*.

So who is this PINK FAIRIES you ask? Actually I guess a bunch of you already know the PINK FAIRIES. Well la de da. A lot of people apparently don't, because I don't see the PINK FAIRIES name in print, well, *ever*! Anyway, PINK FAIRIES formed out of the ruins of Brit proto-punks THE DEVIANTS in the early '70s. THE DEVIANTS released some great albums too, but we're talking PINK FAIRIES here so whatevs.

There was also some cross pollination between them and space rockers HAWKWIND and blah blah blah. *Kings of Oblivion* is their third album and is great fuckin' '70s proto-punk / hard rock. And by then the band was reduced to a three-piece, including guitarist LARRY WALLIS whose name you may recognize as both releasing an awesome and underrated 45 on Stiff Records (shouldn't run you much more than $5), as well as playing in the first lineup of MOTORHEAD. There's a myspace page you lazy fucks so just check out "City Kids" or "I wish I was a girl" and get on the bandwagon already! Oh and JOBRIATH is prolly too fluffy for y'all, especially on his second album, but he's pretty damn cool glitter BOWIE wannabe shit.

Oh, and JERUSALEM. People pay a lot of money for that Deram LP (pun intended). Well I didn't, but I sure enjoy it as if I did. 1972 doesn't hold a lot of mysteries, especially for fans of early heavy rock / doom / metal, and yet somehow JERUSALEM delivers on all fronts. I mean, I'm not dropping names like BLACK SABBATH or whatever (oops!), but Ian Gillan from DEEP PURPLE produced the shit and it's raw and heavy and most importantly, evil. Just get the mp3s or whatever.

If you don't like '70s hard rock, you wouldn't want to look at my stack that day. You might've tried my friend's though: I watched him pull a TARGET OF DEMAND *Man's Ruin* LP (Happy Hermit) out of the bins for $7. Kind of aggravating since it's currently missing from my shelves. I mean, I *do* have a TARGET OF DEMAND LP, only it was a promo copy given to the dude who drew the cover artwork and has a blank cover (???).

Whatever. I remember finding one in a Chicago record store bin ten years ago for $4, almost leaving it there because of the awful cover art, getting it home and thinking, "Weird. A California hardcore LP I've never heard of with a song about straight edge in 1983." It's kind of a rager, but I kinda like their follow-up band DISSENSION better, on their classic *Why Work For Death* LP. Shoulda kept that first copy of TARGET OF DEMAND anyway—or DEMAND'ed my friend's at the record show!

That's about all I got at the record show, unless you like Song Poem records (save that for another column). The next week was pretty dry for the punk vinyls. Actually the whole trip was pretty dry for the punk vinyls. The day before we left I was happy though—I picked up a longtime UK street punk want: THE OPPRESSED *Never Say Die* 7" EP (Firm), their very first EP from 1983, for twenty bucks! I'm running out of street punk rarities to find. Whilst poring over the back cover photo, I decided that I might have to bleach my entire wardrobe; I am feeling this allover splotchy bleached denim look. Do people still do this? OI!

Oh, and I took a chance on a $6.99 mystery LP. ONE HUNDRED FACES were from Trumbull, Connecticut, and released their only album on the Rijid Records label in 1986. If I was to guess from the album cover, I'd say they were a hardcore punk / crossover band—especially with a title like *Christians to the Lions* and a crude sketch of a Christian getting mauled by a lion.

I was surprised to discover it's actually more of a garage punk sound, and what d'ya know, it's actually super poppy and real good! I think "the kids" are finally starting to catch on to the mid-'80s garage / pop punk sound. This is a definite keeper for me, along with Cleveland's MICE (Ha ha, I finally got their 7" from 1982!), Maryland's THE LEFT, and what the hell, I'm even getting a bit of a SWEET BABY vibe, though way more melancholy.

So yeah, five records is all I got for you this month. The pickins are slim, what can I say. The real world ain't what it used to be. Still, I'm pretty stoked: a couple longtime wants, a couple surprises to keep me on my toes. What more can I ask for? Back to the trenches...

This month, we've got a guest column within a column—namely mine. Since this is the health issue, my lovely wife Ellen wanted to write about her experiences as a social worker and case manager I'll add a few of my own comments after that. Take it away, Ellen...

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For those of you who don't know me, I've worked in human and social services for over twenty years. I received a Masters of Social Work from Salem State College in May 2003, majoring in Health and Mental Health. I received my LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker) in June 2004. While in graduate school, I concentrated my research on programs and services for adults and families with developmental disabilities. I sometimes tell people that I have a bad habit of taking very challenging jobs with the most difficult populations. I have worked as a case manager for a large state agency in Boston and am now a social worker at a small hospital for adults who are struggling with chronic mental illness, severe depression and/or substance abuse. At both locations I have worked with many clients who are homeless.

As an intern, social worker and case manager, I have learned a great deal about the correlation between health, nutrition, income and housing. For both internships in graduate school, I was required to visit my clients at their homes. My first internship was with a social service agency in a Massachusetts city with a great deal of poverty.

I saw some apartments that were in terrible shape: I worked with one family whose toilet was broken for several days; another family in a basement apartment had a boy who was always sick with cold and ear infections. The floor in their apartment was always damp. It was so bad that the landlord wasn't going to rent it after the family moved out. I sat with one young mother, who told me that she couldn't afford milk for her children.

I drove past another client as she was standing outside a food pantry, and debated whether I should stop and talk with her. I had a scheduled appointment with this woman at that time, but visiting the food pantry probably took priority over her talking to a graduate student from the suburbs. I never forgot that woman, who had three children at home. I called her later and re-scheduled our appointments for times that did not conflict with her visits to the food pantry.

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At my first internship, we were required to do a project that would benefit our agency, and ideally, the local community. I met with a local action group that was working with the Environmental Protection Agency. Their group was doing a survey of the local neighborhoods on the high rates of asthma and bronchial diseases in the area. I took copies of the surveys and gave them to our case managers and clients. For my term paper, I researched the increasing rates of asthma in large poor urban areas, and it was likely due to old buildings, pollution, bus fumes, auto repair shops and factories with various chemicals. Most environmentally-questionable projects tend to be located in poorer areas and not in the more well-off suburbs. I never did find out the results of the project, as I was only at the agency for the school year.

As a case manager, I was often faced with clients who were worried about being able to afford the co-pay on their medications. I had clients with such stressful lives that they would not always remember to take their meds with them as they moved between friends, relatives, lovers and shelters. I had one client with chronic mental illness who would sometimes "forget" to save money for his prescriptions or even renew them on time. I would often hear "I ran out of my meds."

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Currently, I often deal with patients who tend to be psychiatrically unstable. Sometimes I hear that they could not afford their medications prior to coming into the hospital. Sometimes it is due to a large co-payment, or their insurance runs out. Even a co-pay of a few dollars can be an obstacle. I'm now getting patients who are in the process of losing their jobs and will be losing their health insurance. Massachusetts does have state-provided health insurance, but there can be a gap.

Mental illness is a chronic condition that benefits from consistency in medication. It's scary to think of people who can't afford medications for heart conditions or diabetes. There are programs to help people, but everything takes time, paperwork or the need to meet certain income criteria. I once called a private pharmacy to ask if they could waive the co-pays until my patient received his disability check. They did, but this was a small, independent pharmacy with a long-standing relationship with the patient.

The Massachusetts Medicaid Plan, MassHealth, sends yearly letters to people to renew their insurance. Some of my past clients moved so often that they didn't receive the letters. Some clients with chronic mental illness would ignore the letter until they tried to fill their prescriptions. Sometimes I would get a letter or a phone call saying that my client's state insurance was cancelled. I would have to rush out to that client's home with a copy of the form that needed to be filled out. Then we would call the agency to explain the situation. Usually the problem was resolved quickly, but, in this time of severe budget cuts, not every person with chronic mental illness has a case manager who can run over to help them with a form. Massachusetts is currently planning to cut case managers (including my friends and former co-workers) for budgetary reasons.

I am very dedicated in my work and career. I do have some knowledge of medications, and always try to help my patients in any way possible. I've made charts for patients to help them with their medications, and I've tried to work with Social Security, Medicare and MassHealth to get benefits for my clients and patients. I have no great answers—besides socialized medicine!

I have learned a lot from my clients over the years. I was lucky to grow up in a family that could afford food, shelter, and medical care. Each day, I go to work and try to help my patients in any way that I can to make a difference in their complicated lives.

Great job, Ellen. Time for me to add my two cents worth, which is probably the value some of you place on my viewpoints but I digress. Ellen mentioned the budget cuts in Massachusetts. I think decimation is the proper term, actually. Another $1.5 billion is about to be cut—and that's not only going to affect the commonwealth's social services but local aid, as well—money that the cities and towns depend on to fund schools, libraries, police and fire. It could have been worse if the anti-tax terrorists had had their way in November and the state income tax was abolished, but fortunately it lost by a large margin. Ellen often has to go through hoops to get her clients the services they need in order to survive.

Ellen wrote about high rates of asthma in poorer areas due to unhealthy elements. She also meant to mention that Boston University is

planning on opening a *biolab* near the city's Roxbury section, one of the poorest in the city. This laboratory will study the world's most deadly germs and viruses, and there's been concern about these germs escaping from there. Some residents of Roxbury have called this "environmental racism." As of now, the opening of the lab is on hold until April at the earliest.

She also mentioned "socialized medicine," which I also support. Actually, the right-wingers who don't want any sort of national health care (or any other services for poor people, for that matter) use that term as a cudgel. What I'd like to see is universal health care where no one is uninsured, whether they can afford it or not. Every other industrialized country provides insurance—why not the US?

You know damned well why—the medical and insurance industries and the cowardly, corrupt politicians unwilling to do anything about it. There are always the warnings about waiting lists and poor quality of care, but we recently had overseas guests and they said the system worked fine, for the most part. Nothing is perfect, of course, but there are over 50 million people in the US with no coverage and something needs to be done.

Reform has been attempted in Massachusetts but it's something of a clusterfuck. Since 2007, insurance coverage in Mass. is mandatory, and people are actually fined for not having it. I was talking to a guy at a show the other night who suffers from back problems, but he's currently uninsured so he's unable to do anything about it. He said he's hoping to get insurance this year so he isn't fined again.

It's wrong when people have to suffer because they can't afford to have health issues resolved. I have a friend who has been walking around with a knee brace for at least a few years because there's ligament damage that he can't get surgically repaired.

Another friend of mine recently had a major health scare when a malignant tumor was found in her uterus. Fortunately they were able to remove it before the cancer spread, but she was more concerned about going into deep debt. Combine that with the trauma she was experiencing while waiting to find out the extent of her illness and it made for a very difficult situation. She was in tears when talking to me on the phone. That just makes me angry, and also makes me wonder how these insurance industry fucks can sleep at night—the ones who are playing god and often denying people the care they need.

I'm currently undergoing physical therapy for a nagging shoulder problem that I probably should have addressed years ago. I had to get a referral to visit an orthopedic specialist, who prescribed the therapy. I was given eight visits to the therapist to start. Those visits cost me $25 a pop in co-pays and I'd hate to think how much I'd be paying without being on Ellen's insurance (which takes a huge chunk out of her pay). Add to that the prescriptions we both take and it comes out to a few hundred bucks a month. And people who have health issues similar to ours and are without insurance are likely to put off getting the care they need.

Solutions? Beats me... and I'm not all that optimistic that the situation will be rectified anytime soon. People will continue to needlessly suffer, both physically and financially. And that really sucks.

***

That's it for my rant. Now, it's time for my year-end musical roundup. I think it was something of an off-year for punk rock. There were only a handful of records that blew me away and a lot of good/OK releases. Of course, I wasn't able to track down/listen to everything that might have grabbed me, so perhaps my opinion might have been different, otherwise. The lists aren't in any order, except that Bastard Sons Of Apocalypse's *Strangled By The System* 12" is my record of the year, and Systematic Death were, by far, the best live band I saw this year. Sometimes people are dubious about reunions, but trust me—there was no going through the motions here. It was explosive and frenetic and bands half these guys' age should be so lucky to have such a high energy level. Mind-blowing.

LP/12":

BASTARD SONS OF APOCALYPSE - *Strangled By The System*; MEANWHILE - *Reality Or Nothing*; CHRONIC SEIZURE - *Ancient Wounds*; NIGHTSTICK JUSTICE - s/t; ESTRANGED - *Static Thoughts*; EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING - *Primary Colours*; LIBYANS - s/t; STRAIGHTJACKET NATION - *Cheap Kicks*; STATIONS - s/t; AVSKUM - *Uppror Underifrån*; SOCIALCIDE – *Unapproachable*

7":

NIGHTSTICK JUSTICE - *Claustrophobic*; VIOLENT ARREST - *Criminal Record*; THE YOUNG - s/t; SEX/VID - *Nests*; SMART COPS - s/t; SOCIAL CIRCKLE - *I've Got Afflictions*; REPROBATES - *Stress*; DEEP SLEEP - *Manic Euphoria*; DOUBLE NEGATIVE - *Raw Energy*

DEMOS:

BRAIN KILLER; GENERAL INTEREST; CHRIS EVIL & THE TAINTS

LIVE:

SYSTEMATIC DEATH, STRAIGHTJACKET NATION, CAREER SUICIDE, SEX/VID, AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER, BRAIN KILLER, WASTED TIME, COP ON FIRE

Any questions about this stuff? Just ask...

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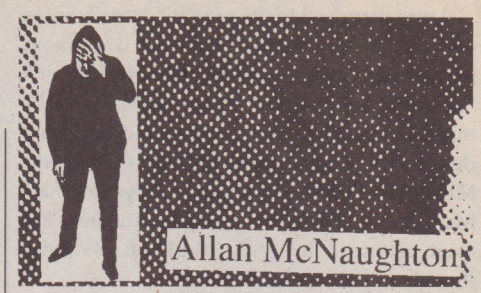
R.I.P. Ron Asheton



Allan McNaughton

I got that Gavin Watson book *Skins & Punks* (Vice) for Christmas. In a way it's like peeking into someone's photo album (in fact that's almost exactly what it is), but the pictures capture the time (end of the '70s/start of the '80s) and place (any British council estate) so perfectly. When I look at these photos I could easily be looking at people I knew, even though I grew up a few hundred miles away. I was never a skinhead though.

There's a novelty record from the punk era (you can hear it for yourself on the otherwise excellent *Kilt By Death* triple CD collection of Scottish punk) by a Scottish "comedian" called Andy Cameron that goes "I Want To Be A Punk Rocker But Ma Mammy Willnae Let Me"; well, my mammy wouldnae let me get my hair cropped, so I had to make do with my 'German helmet' bowl cut. I wanted my ear pierced—no dice. I bought some oxblood Docs off of my mate Davey when he outgrew them. They were brilliant. My mum dyed them black. I think she was just trying to stop me from becoming a hooligan. Of course, dyeing leather never really works perfectly so you could still see the red showing through a little bit, so they didn't look proper black either.

I don't know what it was like in the big cities, but out in the schemes and suburbs (as this book illustrates so well) fashion didn't change overnight when punk arrived. Styles took their time to trickle out to the provinces via the magazines and record covers. Docs with flared trousers, Harrington jackets with your school uniform—most kids looked like an explosion in a jumble sale. By 1981 you had punk, the mod revival, and 2-tone, and while there were people who pretty much kept to one style or another, most people were a hodge-podge of styles borrowed from each of those trends.

I managed to get through my adolescence without really fitting into any of them. Eventually those fashions gave way to whatever came next: I remember people being really into dressing like Big Country, Simple Minds, and U2. Leather bomber jackets and acid wash jeans tucked into ridiculous moonboots. My friends and I trod the fine line between punk, skater, and football casual, with a nod to hip hop. More often than not our style of dress got us singled out for attack because we didn't fit the norm.

It's hard to look back on the late-'70s skinhead era without dwelling on the right-wing politics that skinheads (rightly or wrongly) came to embody. Politics never entered into our minds in those days. What 12-year-old really cares about politics or politicians? You don't know fuck all. In the west of Scotland, right/left politics took a back seat to religious sectarianism anyway. Later on, although I knew they were out there (generally handing out leaflets outside Ibrox Stadium, home of Rangers FC), it was pretty unusual to see an overtly right-wing skin in Glasgow. Once in a while they'd try to organize a rally only to have it broken up by Anti-Fascist Action.

I wish I had more pictures of my schoolmates from those days, capturing the styles we wore and the stuff we got up to. Since I don't, though, I can always look through *Skins & Punks* to bring up some fond memories.

***

It will not have escaped your notice that this issue of the magazine has been devoted to the general topic of health. I am not one to spend too much time thinking about that subject: I generally feel pretty healthy and rarely go to the doctor unless there's absolutely nothing for it. I also rarely make New Year's resolutions, but this year I resolve to start taking my health a bit more seriously.

I'm probably not going to stop doing the unhealthy things I do (which actually isn't much—I'm a non-smoking vegan bike rider; I do like to eat a lot, particularly fried food, and I probably drink a few too many beers), but I need to start looking into preventative medicine. There's heart disease and diabetes in my family and I'm not getting any younger. I do have health insurance (not from my job, I pay for it out of my own pocket) but my HMO's not very good about prevention. They're not that great about anything to be honest. The couple of times I've had to use them in the past few years, for a broken arm and a bout of Lyme disease, have each cost me a couple grand.

I sometimes have to wonder what I'm paying for month after month. I suppose the answer is, it's for if something *really* bad happens (knock on wood). But as of this writing, my dad's been in the hospital in Scotland for five weeks. If he'd had to do that here, he'd be bankrupt. There, it's all—essentially—free. I mean, it comes from the taxpayer, so everyone foots the bill eventually, but it takes that uncertainty out of it. You don't have to worry that you're going to be homeless if you get sick and have to spend some time in hospital. Don't get me wrong, I love America, but that particular aspect of your country is fucking crazy.

***

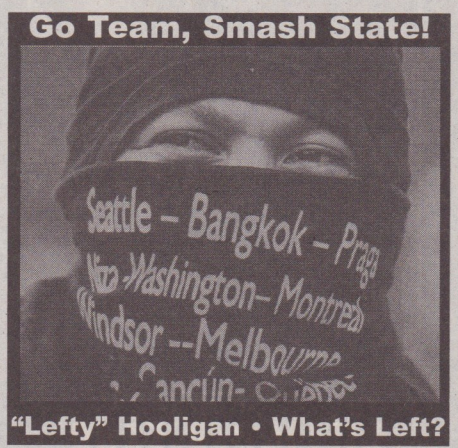
It will be old news by the time you read this, but it was announced today that Ron Asheton, legendary guitarist for The Stooges, was found dead in his home. He was 60 years old. There's been no word yet on the cause of death. I never saw The Stooges live (I now regret passing up their San Francisco show a year or two ago because it was $60 a ticket) and now I never will—although Iggy could take the natural next step (after getting Mike Watt to play bass) and ask J Mascis to play guitar. It's safe to say that music as we know it would not be the same today without Asheton's contribution to the science of riffology. He may have died before his time, but he made a pretty huge and indelible mark on the world. At least his music is sure to live on for a long, long time. And not just on TV commercials.

In the words of shabby television detective Columbo, "One more thing..." I wanted to share with you my friend Gee's recipe for Hot Port. She treated us to this delightfully warming concoction as a post-Christmas dinner *digestif*. I've been drinking this almost every night since. It fair warms the cockles. Its health-giving properties are undocumented but no doubt are legion.

1. Boil the kettle.
2. Insert three or four whole cloves into a lemon wedge.
3. Pour a finger or two of port into a small glass.
4. Add water to taste—probably no more than an amount equal to the port.
5. Add half a teaspoon of sugar and stir.
6. Drop in the clove-y lemon and enjoy while still warm.

Cheers, and Happy New Year!

Allan McNaughton, PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609; www.allanmcnaughton.com or bricksandmortar79 .blogspot.com.



I moved to Oakland from San Diego in 1991. In my initial exploration of the Bay Area, I discovered two invaluable resources I relied on for many years to come. The first was an 8.5x11 piece of paper, printed both sides, in very small type, called the Bay Area Progressive Calendar. Produced by Ken Cheetham, it detailed every progressive event brought to its attention and offered, by mail, a directory of local progressive groups and organizations. Incredibly cool. I first encountered the Progressive Calendar in the free literature zone at the old Cody's Bookstore on Telegraph, and I made a point of seeking out this valuable little ecumenical leftie calendar.

The second was The List. In the day, it was an 8.5x11 piece of paper, folded widthwise, printed in colorful, incredibly small type, as a smart little four pager produced by Steve Koepke listing all the punk, hardcore, ska, rocakabilly, yada, yada, yada shows in the immediate Bay Area. Incredibly cool. I came upon The List at MRR HQ on Clipper Street, as a shitworker typing, scanning, and laying out the magazine's now extinct Classifieds Section. I regularly attended shows back then, so I kept a copy of The List handy.

My memory is a bit fuzzy, so I can't recall if these were weekly or monthly publications, or something in between. Both the Progressive Calendar and The List augmented their street presence with mailed subscriptions and, when it became common, emailed information. And both eventually dropped their physical distribution altogether to bookstores, record shops, political events, shows, and other venues. The Bay Area Progressive Directory and adjunct Calendar are now entirely web based, and can be found at bapd.org. The List still can be had via snail mail by writing The List, P.O. Box 2451, Richmond, CA 94802. You can also get it through email by writing to skoepke@stevelist.com. This information is obtainable online at calweb.com/ ~skoepke/, and several www versions of The List are available, most notably at foopee.com /punk/ thelist/ and kzsu.stanford.edu/ ~calendar/ orig_list.html.

The Progressive Calendar and The List were my lifelines when I moved to Oakland. They helped me get established and oriented, meet people, find things to do, and make the Bay Area my home. They required that I make an effort to go out and about to initially find them, and to subsequently keep track of them. Hunting down a copy of the Progressive Calendar or The List got me out of my tiny apartment to experience the weather, other people, the Bay Area in all its disappointing glory, and the real world. Eventually, I subscribed to both by mail, and I still occasionally refer to them online. What I miss though is that street presence, their physicality, the ability to walk into my local bookshop or record store and find them in with all the other free literature.

It's the disappearance of a physical geography implied by the evolution of the Progressive Calendar and The List that most upsets me. Now, it's all about an amorphous digital geography, which I found troublesome. Those who champion cyberspace and tout the virtues of the virtual would call me old fashioned, and

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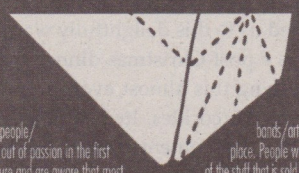

We like to meet people/ bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

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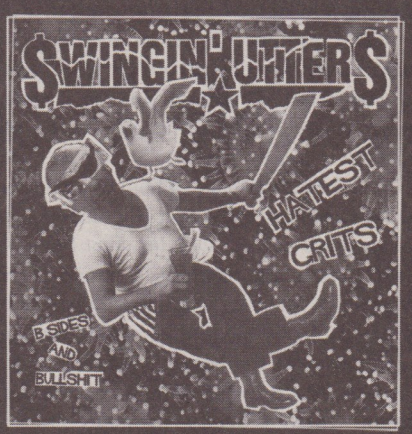

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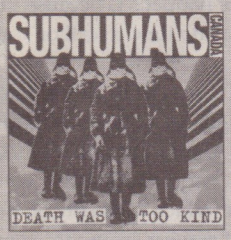

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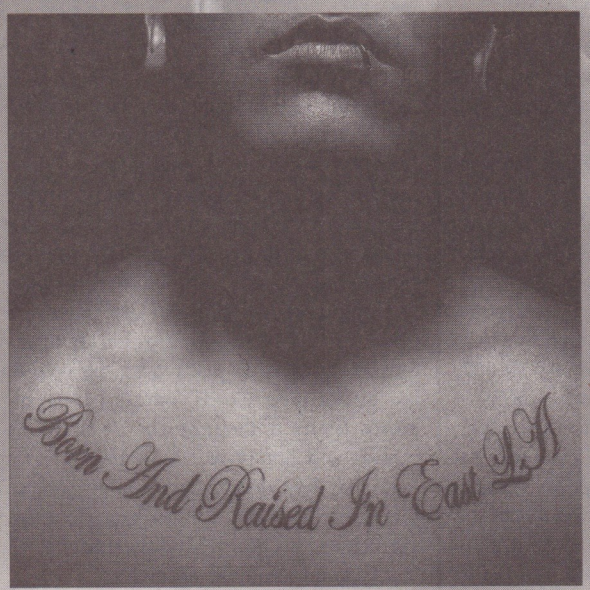

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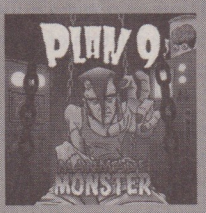

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point out how much more accessible and available both the Progressive Calendar and The List are, now that they're online. No doubt, these are some of the same folks who defend CDs over vinyl, and MP3s over CDs.

Personally, I never could tell much of a difference between music on vinyl versus CDs. But I can hear the difference between MP3s and these previous media. The digital revolution is turning the music I like to listen to into low quality crap, much as it's converting physical community into that sorry-assed excuse for human interaction called the online community. Anyone who has attended a real, live record swap, book fair, concert, or farmers market and then dares to compare them to the shadowy, flame-ridden, cowardly and anonymous, so-called community of your average online chatroom or forum deserves the lobotomy that prolonged internet exposure all but guarantees.

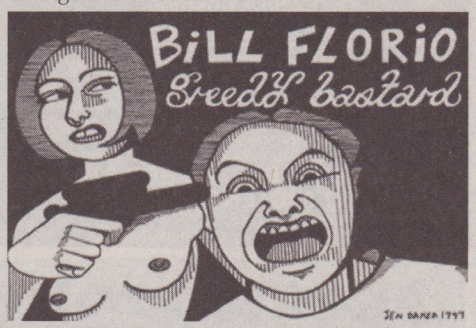
On an unrelated note, I did a column awhile back on political syncretism in general, and the rise of national anarchism on the fascist right in particular. Spencer Sunshine has written a comprehensive article on the latter, called "Rebranding Fascism," for The Public Eye Magazine, available at publiceye.org/ magazine/ v23n4/ rebranding_fascism.html. A rather anemic debate on the article took place on infoshop.org (news.infoshop.org/ article.php?story=20081220225130728), which has only reinforced my disdain for modern anarchism. Anarchists no longer have the *cajones* to defend their politics from such vile interlopers, and thus anarchism fully deserves to be relegated to the dustbin of history.

National anarchists have established a nominal presence in the Bay Area, and they've already publicly attended an all-too-conventional, ANSWER-sponsored anti-AIPAC protest in San Francisco on December 11, 2008. Presumably, they also participated clandestinely in the anti-authoritarian bloc called by UA of the Bay for the equally stodgy January 10, 2009 ANSWER demo protesting Israel's actions in Gaza. At least the national anarchists advertised the call on their website. No one can tell what kind of anarchist you are, whether anarchist at all, if you're dressed all in black and wearing a black bandana over your face. Australian national anarchists who've jumped into Leftist demos explain that "we cover our faces to protect us from the persecution of the other political groups." Meaning, they dress anarchist in order to avoid getting their asses kicked by Leftists, and other anarchists. And rumor has it that black bloc participants in the anti-globalization protests in Genoa, Italy on August 23, 2001 weren't all anarchists or autonomists. Aside from the usual quota of police *agent provocateurs*, a number of young Italian fascists swelled the ranks of the black bloc, in the guise of national autonomists.

I'm looking forward to the day when a group of national anarchists openly try to join a regular local anarcho event, such as the ho-hum December 20, 2008 SF march in solidarity with Greek anarchists and the New School occupation. I bet that such an attempt will produce general consternation and confusion, not to mention much hand wringing. But in the end the regular anarchists will wimp out and let the national anarchists join in. Unchallenged. Any takers?

For someone who has just decried the pernicious effects of the digital over the real, I sure use a lot of internet sources.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@mac.com.



For the past month or so, I've been trying to figure out what to write about health care. Since my mother has worked in the industry for twenty years or so, I sought her advice on a number of issues. I know many people are going to whine about their current health crises or the system in general, but I thought a more practical approach would be more fitting.

I originally was going to take notes and just come up with some scenarios for her to answer, but she insisted on just typing my column for me in her own words, which I thought was pretty funny. I thought about situations my friends and family or I have been in recently, and what they went to her for advice about, and this is a little guide about what to do when you get sick or hurt and what have you.

My mom wrote the following:

When the Hospital or Doctor sends you a bill and you know you have health insurance. After screaming at your loved ones what the hell!!!! Then punching the wall and now your hand hurts!!

This is what you do:

First, take a deep breath. When you calm down, you pick up the phone and dial.

Keep in mind, at least half the time the hospitals and doctors offices just mail a bill to you and do not bother to see if you even have insurance. Let's face it—some people are stupid enough that they will pay the bill, while others just throw it in the garbage. If you throw it away, I will guarantee you that in a week or two you will get a notice from a collection agency. One of the reasons this happens is because the medical billing staff has no time to call or wait for your check.

So look at the bill. There is a telephone number on it. Some hospitals even have an email address you can write to. You can call or email. You need to be very, very polite. State your name, account number (which is usually on the top of the bill), date of service, insurance company name and the personal ID number on your insurance card.

Very possibly, you owe them nothing, if you have a deductible—which you usually have for hospital visits, not necessarily doctor visits—you will have to pay that. But most of the time a phone call will fix the large bill. Most important is to realize that the people you get on the phone are being screamed at all day, and it's amazing what a little bit of kindness to them will get you.

If you don't have insurance, most hospitals have a sliding scale rate. You have to ask—if not when you're admitted then when the bill comes. Regarding doctors, it depends; there are a few doctors who will lower their fee. Keep in mind: When a doctor or a hospital write a bill for service, they rarely get payments anywhere close to what they ask for.

Example: Doctor's office charges $150 for services; the insurance company will reimburse the doctor $20 to $100 depending on the insurance company. So if you can talk to the doctor and ask for him/her to reduce your fee because you have no insurance, it is worth a try. Many doctors' office receptionists have no authority to reduce fees, so you probably need to talk to the doctor directly.

(Good luck getting him/her on the phone).

Meanwhile, if you don't have health insurance, here are a few suggestions. The Department of Social Services has insurance for children (which is advertised). What they don't advertise is that they have insurance for adults. If your income is very, very limited, look into this insurance. There are other options: if you go to college and are uninsured, they usually insist you buy their insurance (which isn't usually great, but cheaper than other options.)

Ok, thanks mom.

A friend of my father is in charge of several hospitals in New York City, and he explained to me that the people who really get screwed are those who are just making ends meet and working off the books: deli owners, hot dog stand guys—probably a lot of people reading this now. They end up getting crappy care going to the ER when they are sick, lose income they can't recoup, and then never pay the hospital bills, further worsening the fact they can't get

credit, sometimes can't even get a bank account. In the end, the hospital just eats the costs and passes them on to whomever else they can.

I then tried to get my mom to write about what to do about getting your grandparents into nursing homes and assisted living without needing to sell their homes to pay for it. (For the record, we've had a winner and a loser in both categories with my family.) She told me this would take an entire book, but she said she'd be happy to give advice if anyone in this situation emails me. Isn't my mom nice?!

You can always contact me at bill@candids.com

Stay healthy!

Recently my zine *Fag School* came under a little bit of fire for what someone deemed the "flippant" attitude regarding sex practices detailed in the zine. The critique was mostly centered over our politics and practices that went against "condom code"—and questioned how we had the audacity to write these stories when so many from the community and the world suffer from HIV. I didn't take this critique lightly at all, and knew there would come a time when I'd have to address it.

Now there was the whole ACT UP spiel I could've given about how the critique was sorta homophobic (why does gay sex automatically equate to HIV? But wait—we already know why).

An older friend explained to me once that he'd spent years reading punk zines written about straight girls getting abortions as a result of consensual sex, but these stories are not held to the same flame as some dude talking about how he engages willfully in unprotected sex (i.e. barebacking—though I hate the buzz term appeal of this word) to completion. It's the same behavior: i.e. taking cum in an orifice—but one is culturally more steeped in taboo. You won't find as much literature written about the latter.

From a personal standpoint I have to say I don't hate condoms, but I simultaneously feel like safe sex isn't always hot sex. Latex irritates my butthole. But because of that whole pesky AIDS thing I put on rubbers (though slightly grudgingly). This was an intervention I took for my health. There was a time (when I was more of a drunk) when this was very sadly not the case. I was hanging out with "the wrong crowd" (a few of which who are actually still some of my good friends). The media would probably denote us as "bug chasers" (i.e. boys actively trying to catch HIV), but I have *never* agreed with that terminology, and I feel like we were in fact just irresponsible drunks in our early twenties who weren't making boys use rubbers.

Some in the crew were already positive, so it wasn't a big deal for them—but some weren't. We treated it as a non-issue as we were all seemingly fucking the same people (randoms at the bar, porn stars, each others' ex-boyfriends—you name it). We hung out at the bars with older guys (cause that's who we wanted to pick up) in the Folsom.

I have to say that whenever I had sex in these environments I always felt a pressure to not use rubbers, and was too drunk to care. Some would say to me during this time period shit like, "Why don't you find a nice boy and settle down?" As if this boy would magically fall out of the sky. From what I'd seen so far of the construct of gay boyfriendship in SF, I knew that this safe monogamous boyfriend isn't always this option handed to all of us—it happens organically and sporadically—not at the snap of your fingers. And besides, my crew and me weren't the type that was gonna sit around and wait for this hypothetical boy. Too horny.

Also, considering what our dating pool was, finding a boyfriend where we were looking wasn't going to ensure our safety. We felt better off being renegades. Things got worse. Like that year we spent getting blacked out and going to bathhouses. This little excursion was the straw that broke the camels back. I look at the entire picture and it makes me a little sad how "barebacking" got so tied up in our sex. But sex itself can be soooooo sad sometimes.

I also got bummed when I thought about how much of our self-worth, sense of masculinity, belonging and depression got tied up in that shit too. It seemed so hopeless to me—like it was soooo *everywhere*. (I've had boys who do outreach for the "Stop Aids" project tell me some of the dirtiest barebacking stories ever! Starring them no less!) I began to see a problem with the bars. Everywhere was covered in condoms and posters but once alcohol entered into the equation the safe sex message went out the window. Why do people like to lose control? When I emerged from this I was still on shaky ground. I was negative still and wanted to stay that way and needed a reprise. I felt like it was a problem that I could only talk to older gay men about, and that helped a lot. Most talked about how they felt for our generation, as in their case AIDS just showed up one day—they didn't have to make these same challenging decisions. This was an aspect of gay life they weren't going to teach you on Will and Grace. My gay uncle broke it down like this: "I miss my friends and I'd miss you too. Try to be a good boy. If you can't I understand, but please try."

I got the message, and in the end I chose to write about it because the silence was killing me. And I just feel you're always better off talking about things.

The editors tell me this is the health issue. And despite not being a very crucial topic I have few things to say about it. The most obvious is that the US health care system is no TV sketch, a fucking shit system, a raped ass or any other d beat analogy you care to use. While in almost every other country resources are used to keep people healthy and productive, in America resources are used to make the most possible money off people getting sick.

Since the USA's health care system is run by profiteers and corporate raiders, the best way to fight back is to stay out of its clutches. In most countries, public health and prevention are part of the system, but here things are a little skewed. We are a consumer-driven society where mass marketing and a multi-billion dollar advertising industry push the instant gratification of our most petty desires as absolute necessities. People are kept in a childlike state of dependency in a system that profits from selling them things they don't really need and convincing them that they need them right *now*, no matter what.

These childlike indulgences and desires are all around in overt and subliminal forms—from movie stars lighting up smokes, to rappers name-dropping liqueurs, to the billboards on the sides of buses. Drug and alcohol use is glorified by the mass media and entertainment. Agribusiness and food conglomerates push processed foods that have no nutritional value and destroy our health. Your tax dollars are used to subsidize products like high fructose corn syrup, which contributes to obesity and diabetes. On every side there are messages aimed at convincing you to indulge your desires to eat fatty, sweet foods and to drink and do drugs in order to be happy today and forget about being sick tomorrow.

Part of punk is about learning to reject conformity and look critically at the bullshit the system tries to force down your throat. Rebelling against the establishment means living a healthy DIY lifestyle and staying out of

their for-profit hospitals. Being vegetarian and straight edge is a good start, or at the very least moderating drug, cigarette and alcohol use and moderating meat consumption.

Switching to an organic whole food diet and getting lots of exercise is the next step. Generally leading a healthy lifestyle is in your best interest, although not in the interest of those who profit from making you sick. Making lifestyle choices when you are young can have a major impact on your health for your entire life. That is to say, not getting into the habit of smoking or eating meat in your youth and sticking with it will make a much bigger difference than being forced to quit or cut back later in life when you start getting sick.

Establishing a sense of balance in your life can be a struggle. I for one have never been able to kick my coffee habit and could do with a good bit more exercise, but I have tried over the years to get more, rather than less healthy while I watch many around me be get weaker and sicker as time goes on.

The US health care system is a failure. It's the most expensive system in the world, yet its people are the least healthy in the world. Immigrants to the USA from Mexico and Latin America see their health *decline* when they move to the USA, rather than improve. While politicians blow a lot of smoke about health care, the real issues are never on the table.

While we have a great deal of socialism for investment bankers and stockbrokers, the idea of even modest socialism for the working people is portrayed as a red menace. I don't really think the current system can be effectively reformed. Our political system is so corrupted by corporate interests that even the most well-meaning package of reforms will by hijacked by politicians who are all beholden to big business and turned into another huge subsidy of the corporate elite by the taxpaying workers. So the best health care plan of all is to hope you don't get sick.

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As we all know, Sweden had one of the best punk scenes in the late '70s and early '80s. Some of my favorite examples of the late-'70s Swedish style are the two 7"s from GLO. The first 7" from 1979 is magically chaotic and raw: Glo sounds totally out of tune, sick and sloppy yet somehow infectiously catchy at the same time. "Discoäckel" from the first EP is probably their best-known track since it's been on a number of comps. However, I think the second 7" is the best. The band sounds more powerful while still barely in control. Each song seems to fall into chaos and the next one begins out of the ruins.

Seekers of these tasty rippers are not as out of luck as those of many other Swedish punk records, as both 7"s are comped in their entirety on *Killed By Death 77*. Some tracks also appear on the *Bloodstains Across Sweden* and *Back to Front* comps, but your best bet is to track down the originals or *KBD 77*, which also includes some sick joints by Kjott and Attentat.

BRACE BELDEN is THE LAST PUNK

Alright, so rock and punk and all that talks about pretty much three things: girls, war, or being crazy (also, drugs, but half the songs about drugs are about girls and vice versa)—but what about being sick? I've compiled a short and entirely useless list of songs you can listen to if you have a) the flu b) scabies c) nothing else to do.

George Brigman "Jungle Rot" – *"Remember what your father said/when the weather's hot/something something young girls/beware the jungle rot."* Both a beautiful lush love ballad and a fatherly warning that if you wanna screw, make sure it's cold out. And all this time I thought Jungle Rot was what you got if your boots were damp, not your vagina. You gals got it rough, I guess.

Dictators "Disease" – I'm not gonna explain this one because this a great goddamn song and record, but you know it really isn't as good as the other two. Don't get genital warts.

Ian Dury and the Blockheads "Sex and Drugs and Rocknroll" – *"Sex and Drugs and Rocknroll is all my brain and body need/Sex and Drugs and Rocknroll they're very good indeed."* Does anyone actually like this band? Anyone who likes this shit is an asshole. I tried to when I was 12 because my uncle recommended it, but this is like Elvis Costello if he was 35, overweight, and a wife-beating latent homosexual.

Easybeats "Come On In, You'll Get Pneumonia" – Music written by Paul Anka's left nipple, lyrics penned by my grandmother (a Jew), then sung by Scott Walker's autistic cousin, by way of Bowie at his manliest. Everyone in Australia is completely out of touch with anything remotely connected to any sort of reality.

Infest "Sick Machine" – Chronic bronchitis due to massive amounts of cigarette consumption has driven Joe Denunzio to write a song about being a sick machine.

Hypnotics "Eating Soup" – Every time I got the fever I get a hard on for some Hot Soup and call every single girl whose number I have (two-and-a-half) and ask 'em to bring some over, pour it on my shoulder then sleep under the bed. Never works, I've been sick for 27 years.

Randy Newman "12 Songs" - This fat sack of shit is on my record player right now and it's making me throw up in my mouth and cry and diarrhea all over the yoga mats that cover the floor of my room in lieu of carpet (I'm allergic).

Electric Prunes "I Had Too Much to Dream Last Night" – I have dreams. I take Ambien to fall asleep because I have trouble doing so organically, and I think one of the side effects is that you become completely insane when you're off on the astral plane. Last night, I dreamt I jumped into a sewer. I was a cop, and my partner leapt with me only to get caught in a trap and strung up by his feet, with this fat slob (possibly Randy Newman) yelling, "Kill me and I'll let him go!" But my gun wouldn't fire, so Randy (or his double) let my partner go anyways because we'd reached a standstill in negotiations, and the three of us trudged through a canal full of shit to the tofu section at Safeway. But anyways, all the Prunes are saying is that they had fucked up dreams too because they slept too long, all the way through *The Man from U.N.C.L.E* re-run at 2 o' clock. It's a pity but that's life, huh?

Government Warning "Fat Nation" – The crazy thing is, last time I saw anyone from this band was last summer when I was on tour with Life Trap/Citizens Patrol for a week and Brandon and I went to Taco Bell, where he ate the entire fucking building and then a soccer ball. So fuck you Kenny Ball, I'm fucking hungry and sometimes it's the only thing open.

Easter Monkeys "Take Another Pill" – The Easter Monkeys write a catchy number detailing the fluctuating price of Advil available at the 7/11 in Southeastern Akron.

Lion of Judah LP – Alright, I picked this one out but I can't remember why, but Jesus H. these lyrics are borderline retard-genius. *"In the heart of the right men/in the heart of the white men/lies a piece of the devil."* Maybe he meant to say a piece of Devil's Food cake—every time I eat some of that I get such terrible heartburn. They also have cool lyrics because when they're taken out of context they're really sexy, like *"Suck it/Pump it/Zap it/Dye it/Suck it up/pump it in/zap it off/dye it again,"* which is either about getting a blowjob and then fucking a really suction-y vagina or smoking a cigarette while at the hairdresser.

The Fall "Eat Y'Self Fitter" – My friend Bomba saw the Fall once and Mark E. Smith just sat behind a desk with one glove on and the desk was covered with a mess of papers. I asked Bomba if he saw what was on the papers and he said he didn't but I figured they had the lyrics on them and also some were pictures of girls naked. The Fall is great and all but I bet Mark Smith is a real annoying prick.

That's as far as I got. You know what I did instead of compiling the rest of this insipid unfunny list? I got dead drunk and spent all

night puking up white stuff in the toilet of my apartment, of which I'll be kicked out of by the time this issue goes to press, because my roommate is a soulless old woman who doesn't understand what it means to be a decent human being.

I spent the hours between eight and ten this morning in a state of pathetic repose on my dirty bed, hacking up huge glops of gloop and spitting them into a glass nearby my bed. I knocked over a glass of water which in turn knocked over a half-full beer can full of cigarette butts that spilled all over my books and glasses and loose change and I spent a feverish fifteen minutes cleaning it all up with a bottle my roommate marked "Girly Cleaner."

Health? Fuck health, fuck "punk health," you get your seventy-five years of moving and talking and walking and fucking and breaking stuff until you get colon cancer and then you die. And unlike what shit Christians like Dry Rot would have you think, there's nothing after that except a real rot, but you've been rotting since you were born so you should be goddamn used to it by then.

And at your funeral they stand around: geriatrics with full-sleeve arm tattoos because, you know, it's the future and everyone is going to look like an asshole, and they're crying their salt-tears which tumble down their ancient prune faces onto the astro-turf of Level Three of Cemetery Alpha-8 somewhere below New Kansas City, and they take this issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* magazine and wipe those crystal drops and toss its yellowed pages into your casket where it falls on your face—those pathetic, bloated, withered nose and mouth and eyes of yours hidden from the sight of those who once loved you and put your dick in their mouth and mothered your children.

Henry Rollins was a pussy.

Years ago I was attending my second of seven years of my two-year college career. I was living in some studio apartment at some shitty student apartment complex called "Sundown" in Gainesville, Florida. The complex was so shabby that the guys who did maintenance at the place joked that the shithole had gotten its name because when they first started construction, the foreman had said, "Let's get these babies up by Sundown."

Anyway, I could hear through the walls on each side of my apartment. The girl next door—I don't remember her name, but I called her the "Screamer" 'cause she screamed a lot—used to bitch and moan that I made too much noise. I really didn't, and if the walls had been fucking thicker, she woulda kept her yap shut. I mean, so what if my band at that time, Roach Motel, used to rehearse in my living room/bed room/kitchen/dining room/bicycle garage/bathroom/etc? We weren't that noisy, our songs were pretty good, and the two gerbils, three mice, one rabbit, two snakes, three parakeets and one cockatiel named "Wally" (for her mohawk, after Watty from the Exploited) all seemed to like us.

And besides, the Screamer made worse sounds. On those rare occasions when she did have sex, it sounded like Herve Villachez and Mason Reese getting it on in a kiddy pool full of Jell-O—a hell of a lot less entertaining than Roach Motel. Come to think of it, her sex life did kinda sound like later Dead Kennedys. Oh well.

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One glorious day, the band is at my apartment awaiting our tour guests' arrival. We had planned this whole southeast tour thingamajig, and this band that was supposed to show up was late. So while we waited, we practiced our set a few times. Like fifteen minutes later, we hear a van pull up and we all go outside. This ugly green and blue Ford with AC/DC and Sabbath stickers screeches to a halt and out jump five unshaven, bad-smelling, homeless people look-alikes. They wave at us, then run across the twenty feet of parking lot and jump into the complex pool with all their clothes on.

The manager of the complex, Mrs. Armor: a frail, 80-year-old women with like a heart condition or something, comes running out dragging her like 90-year-old husband by his hand. He had just recently suffered a couple of strokes and a few by-pass surgeries and stuff. Anyway, she sees these guys in the pool and then she sees me. She drags her husband over to me and yells, "Get these hippies out of the pool!" I'm shocked. Doesn't she understand? So I answer, "These are not hippies, Mrs. Armor, this is Black Flag."

I guess I expected her to say, "Oh, Black Flag, gee, I shoulda known. Of course. My, isn't that Greg Ginn with that button-up shirt on? Oh, and that must be Chuck, what a fine young man. Oh, and that's Dez, and that's Emeil, and, oh, the fine young fellow with that Manson wannabe look must be the new singer, Henry Garfield, oops, I mean Rollins. He must have gotten married and changed his last name."

Instead she tells me I have five days to move out.

***

It was to be the Black Flag, Roach Motel and Saccharine Trust tour. We are gonna do like five or so dates in the south, and Roach Motel is hosting this leg of their tour. Anyway, we all divide up and decide who is gonna ride with who. Since Roach Motel's van was actually a Datsun 610 Station Wagon with a Batman bat on the hood of the car, only a few of the band members could ride with me, and the rest would have to go in Black Flag's van with the other bands. Considering our only equipment were our guitars ('cause Greg and company were nice enough to let us use their shit) I got about three or four people and a couple of guitars.

Bob, the singer from Roach Motel, and his girlfriend, Cindy, were to ride with me, along with my girlfriend at the time, Natalie. She was gonna sit up front and keep me company. But then Charles Manson walks up to the car and says, "I'm riding with you," as he stares blankly at an eight ball he has stolen from some pool hall. I look at Bob and he shrugs his shoulders.

Natalie says she'll ride in the back of the car, so I get stuck up front with Mr. Personality. As we are pulling out, our roadie John McQuiggan shows up. The van is already too far up the road, so John also rides with us, in the back with Natalie. My muffler lasts two hours before it gets scraped off the bottom of the car.

***

So, here we are, on the road, leaving Gainesville, on our way to our first show in Tampon. Thrills. Bob and Cindy are sitting directly behind me, chain-smoking generic cigarettes while chugging down Diet Pepsis. John and Natalie are in the very back of the car complaining how cramped it is, and asking if we are almost there yet. In front of us is this ugly van with crazy hippies car surfing on acid. Man, I'd thought they would die. But it was kinda cool and funny, seeing those guys on top of the van with their hair blowing, making believe they were on surfboards, all the while going 65 mph on I-75.

Bob and I made some comments about Californians and how stupid they are. But Henry didn't respond. He was too busy squeezing that eight ball and practicing that Manson look in his eyes. Every once in a while I'd look over his way and say, "Hey, how's it goin', man?"

He'd just sneer at me and continue playing with his ball. So, like I start to think to myself, geez, this guy is a dick: here he is, the lead singer of Black Flag, and he is in my car! Wow. Am I cool or what? Wait'll I tell my mom and dad—they'll be thrilled. Really. But like, Hank baby is sucking all my enthusiasm right the hell out of me. Or maybe he won't ride in my car anymore after Tampa.

No such luck.

***

Roach Motel goes on first in Tampa. It is the first time I am playing through Greg Ginn's

equipment. I plug in my guitar and strike an "A" chord. That's my favorite chord. All my bands will attest to that.

Anyway, the fucker is so loud that my hair literally stands up and my pants legs fly forward. What power. What intensity. What an ego! So, we play our set and only get in about twelve fights or so. Kinda a slow night. Actually, one kid, Bob Noxious, took a running dive at me and I stepped aside. He went face first into the side of Greg's eight-foot-ten by twelve-foot speaker cabinet. He broke his jaw in three places. But that didn't stop him. He stood in front of us the entire rest of the set with his jaw hanging down below his neck, kinda off to the left a bit. He kept saying, "You guyth are punth roth," as the blood dripped from his chin on to his "Sid Burger" shirt. Yeah. Wow. Thrills.

Finally Black Flag get on stage and Hank hasn't talked to anyone all night. Well, except for the eight ball. He kept telling it how mean he was, and how he'd kick its ass and stuff. Let me tell ya, that eight ball looked scared. Anyway, so the Flag takes the stage and they rock. Well the band did anyway. To this day, I am still stealing their moves.

So, the fucking new lead singer of Black Flag is this guy in shorts. *Shorts* for Christ's sake! And to top it off, he is *barefoot*! This is not punk rock. Also, the guy has no neck, and looks like a deformed tree-stump. Anyway, he sings all the classics and only yanks at the hair of a couple of girls. Whoopee.

***

The next night we are playing Fort Lauderdale. A nice long drive. And since Henry is still the new guy in Black Flag, he gets to ride with me again. Of course at this point I am thrilled. I ask, no, beg Dez and Chuck to let me take one of them, or Greg. But they all like to hang together, and, well, they say Henry likes to be by himself. "Yeah," I tell them, "I can see that."

So we all pile into the car and drive south. A few times I get scared that we are gonna get pulled over and a cop will give me a ticket for transporting either infected forestry or an escaped mental patient. But we make it down there in one piece. Henry is very quiet so Bob and I do most of the talking: mostly about last night's set, and what we are gonna play tonight. At one point, Henry and his eight ball look up at us and ask if we have any tapes in the car. I tell him, sure, Dead Boys, Ramones, Rezillos, DK's, Black Flag, Bazookas, and lots of other punk shit. He asks if we have any Black Sabbath or Led Zeppelin. I tell him that shit is not "punk rock," and what is a guy like him listening to that crap for anyway? He says nothing, and pouts for the rest of the ride.

***

Our set at the Fort Lauderdale club Finders is probably the best and worst of our entire existence. We don't get through one song, and the entire set lasts about seventeen minutes. After we would count off each song, the audience would literally attack us. So after attempting two songs, we gave up and just did the count offs—one-two-three-four—then we'd hit the audience over the head with our guitars. The drummer kept playing, and Bob kinda tried to sing, but the audience would drag him off stage and stomp all over him.

I actually dented my guitar in two places on some idiots' heads. And the blood was kinda difficult to get off (I suggest Lysol 501, it seems to work well). Anyway, after our set, Black Flag played. They kicked ass, but we sort of had already beaten up the audience with our guitars and bass, so a lot of people weren't really into it. But the guys in Saccharine Trust and everyone in Black Flag (except Henry) really dug that night. It was fun.

***

The next night we were playing Daytona Beach at the Twenty Grand Club. But on the drive up I didn't get Henry. Maybe the guys in his band felt sorry for him. Or maybe they knew we didn't like him and his eight ball. We get to the club and play. Normal Roach Motel set. Bob passes out and goes into one of his diabetic comas. His girlfriend injects him with some insulin and he wakes up, drinks more beer, and finishes the set. Punk Rock.

Then it is time once again for the Charles Manson Experience. The Flag starts kickin' through its set and they are rockin. Some girl is kinda giving cow eyes to the band from up front. She winks at Henry and he pulls her up on stage. "Wow," I think. "That's nice, he wants to dance with her."

Actually it is more like he wants to dry-rape her. He throws himself on top of her and grunts, "Gimmie gimmie gimmie, I want some more" over and over. He is dry humping her while pulling her hair with one hand, and singing in the mike with the other.
Soon the girl begins to cry and begs to be let off the ground. But Mr. Rollins is still bumping and grinding away in his cute little blue shorts. Soon the audience hops on top of Henry trying to get him off this girl. But he won't let go of her.

Finally the band stops playing, but Rollins is still chanting "Gimmie gimmie gimmie" as he thrusts at the woman. Finally, he must of come or something, cause he gets off of her. She runs out into the parking lot crying, and the band finishes the rest of the set. When we confronted him later, he just stared at his eight ball and was very non-combative. I guess he only picked on girls.

***

Anyway, we finished the tour and I gotta say, all the guys except for Henry were great people. Chuck sent us lots of postcards, and I've run into Greg a few times. But, for the way Henry acted on that tour, I gotta say this:

Henry Rollins Was A Pussy.

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. Disco Assault's new *Seven Inches of Pleasure* includes "More Beer," a Roach Motel cover. Don't these kids know any better songs? Actually, they rock!! Their EP, *Saturday Night Bleeder* has other tunes like "My Fate" and "Asshole Stare" that kick ass! You guys go!

Another great disc I got is from Last Rate Service. Actually, I got two of their CDs, and they are great. Check them out. Real music and tunes like "Drinking Dreams Away' and "Freedom From Religion" cement these guys into the punk rock hall of fame.

Don't forget to get Potato Famine's new CD out on Salem Ashtray Records. These guys will blow you away!!!

2. *Left 4 Dead* is a new video game from Valve (makers of *Half-Life*) that is more addictive than crack. Killing zombies has never been so fun, except when I used to run them over in Florida. Wait! Those were old people! Close enough!!!

Another great game I've been hooked on is *Call Of Duty: World At War*. You get to fight the Japanese in the Pacific. And you get a flamethrower. Nothing like warm Japanese food! Punk Rock!

3. Happy New Year and Bless You All! [www.georgetabb.com]

This is the Night
This is the Drill

So here's the thing: I always say that when I'm in DC or when I see my mother I sink into this deep, dark depression and I start thinking that's the only reality and I should just stay there, who am I kidding by trying to find anything else? But then once I leave, it actually clears—even if I don't believe it will clear it does. Or maybe it doesn't clear but it gets better, which happens right when I get off the train in New York and immediately I'm all excited.

I guess New York is exciting, exciting upon arrival, and then I actually sleep pretty well so the next day is smoother than I thought. But then there's today: after waking up in the middle of the night without a way to turn without pain, this drill right in the middle of my back

between my shoulder blades. It's worse when I'm on my side, either side, but it's not so much better on my back either. Usually I talk about sinus pain as a drill through my head, but this is a different kind of drill: turn, no, turn the other way, no, get up? I don't want to get up.

Then the next day it's hard to do much, I mean I don't want to do that much anyway but I don't want to feel like I can't do anything. I've banned myself from craigslist because in DC I went there when I was so tired I couldn't function and that didn't exactly help me to function. Usually on tour I go to a lot of sex clubs, but this time I've been too tired or maybe it just seems like a distraction—or maybe I'm too tired and it seems like a distraction. You know the drill between loneliness and alone, that one hurts too. There's nowhere to go in New York, anyway, nowhere that would be fun except maybe a few places with too much smoke, and I'm not going to risk that.

Of course there's that other kind of drilling people talk about, on knees or bent over, and I wouldn't turn it down if it were approaching me on the street. Sometimes I see it in people's eyes but then there's the cold and everything else and I don't know if it's really what I'm seeing anyway.

This drill comes from inside, in the middle of my back. It's strange how, as soon as I mention the construction metaphors of sex this pain sounds funny too—but it's not funny, so I'm going to have to go back and think of different words or make them work in a different way. It almost seems like everything I can do aggravates this pain, sex too. I'm certain though I'm not certain I can do that. Definitely when I'm sitting at this table or holding my shoulders up high in the cold, or sleeping I guess (sleeping seems to aggravate it the most), and I'm thinking of going to a movie except I think that might be just as bad. I have to sleep but I don't have to go to this movie—or not now, anyway, although I'm not sure what else to do.

Here I am trying to catch up on writing, but really I don't have enough energy for writing either.

This is the night

There's something so amazing about that moment when I get in bed and think, "Oh, this is what I should be doing all the time. This is the best thing I've ever done in my life. This is what I need, thank you thank you thank you." Sometimes that moment even lasts into sleep that comforts and when it's interrupted I sink right back in and think, "Oh, this is the night, this is the night when everything."

Except. Except it's not that night, because then I'm turning back and forth and at first that's okay too. I just tell myself I'll fall back asleep soon, soon I'll fall back asleep. It's okay. I'm just awake for a moment. It's okay. But then there's that pain in the middle of my back, that pain between my shoulder blades, and then. And then. And then there's that pain, that pain between my shoulder blades. And then I'm awake, really awake and thinking about everything that's gone wrong: just little details, every little detail and it all leads to how the hell am I going to leave to go back to San Francisco on the train when I'm already in all this pain. How the hell am I going to get back to sleep with all this pain, how the hell am I going to get back to San Francisco?

So then tonight's the night, well now it's day. I might as well admit it's day it's day it's day! It's day and I get out of bed to take amino acids, maybe amino acids will calm me and then back in bed to call Gina to say not today, today I can't meet I can't meet today even though it's the only day to meet and edit our movie—there's too much pain. And then I'm laughing because I'm delirious and I can't form full sentences. I know what I want to say but it doesn't come out right. Delirium is better than panic. I'll take delirious any day oh it's okay in this big white bed white sheets white comforter white walls white shutters and not too much light because it's raining and it's the ground floor. This is New York there's not too much light anyway and on days like today that's comforting.

Oh, but I can't meet today, I mean I think I can't meet—no I can't meet. I mean what am I saying? That's how my sentences go: eventually I'm talking about that moment right when I get in bed and I think, oh, this is everything I've ever needed, everything here between my body and these sheets my body in these sheets—sometimes I even like my body in that moment but I don't say that. I say and then it never lasts, it never lasts it never lasts it never lasts.

And then it takes me a few moments to notice I'm not just laughing I'm crying too, crying with the rhythm of the laughter the laughter the tears and the white sheets the comforter too warm except now it actually feel comforting.

I'll keep trying

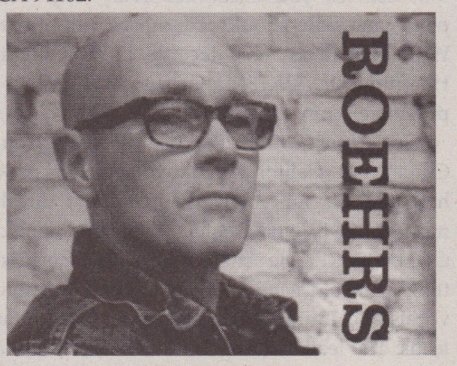
I decide not to take the train. I would like to say that I decide to take the train at a later date, a later date when I might feel better, but that's just not the case. What's actually true is that I decide not to take the train—I mean I decide not to take the train because it's not an option, other than on the date when I'm scheduled to leave, until after the holidays, because sleeper cars on the train are fully booked until after the new year.

And I can't take the train now because of this back pain that wakes me up in the middle of the night, and then I'm destroyed, every night it seems now, and it's pretty likely that this pain would get way worse on the train. Plus I'd have to wake up earlier than usual to catch the train, which always means that I don't sleep because I keep worrying that I'm sleeping too late, and that I'll arrive in Chicago at 9:45 a.m., which is like arriving at the end of the world, and then I'll only stay in Chicago for two days to somehow get groceries and cook for two extra days, and then get up too early again to catch the train with probably more back pain and who knows what else.

So I decide not to take the train, and I guess you probably know what that means. I'm having trouble saying it, because when I say that a plane destroys my life for two months I really mean it, really really mean it and. And I'm taking a plane. A first-class seat, just in case that helps, but still a plane, and I want to think it will be okay. I mean I'm doing it so that it won't cause me more pain, I want to feel great on the day that I get on the plane, I want to feel like maybe this time will be different and when I get off the plane it will be like nothing bad has ever happened to me, blue sky inside and outside—or maybe that's too much. I'm getting carried away. I just want to think that maybe it'll be okay. I thought that last time, two years ago when I got stuck in Chicago and ended up taking off in a plane and even when I arrived it felt relaxing. I thought maybe this is the answer. And then. And then.

So it's hard not to feel like it's the beginning of the end. I have a week to rest, and I'm hoping that helps, but it hasn't helped yet. I mean maybe it would help if I could rest, I mean sleep without interruption—that's rest, right? I'll keep trying.

Yes, I'm still exhausted from the crazy book tour for my new novel, *So Many Ways to Sleep Badly*, but it makes me feel more engaged and now I just have to keep that engagement somehow… Feel free to check in on me via my blog, nobodypasses. blogspot.com. You can also send me love letters and/or delicious threats via www.mattildabernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past *MRR* columns. Or you can write to me at 537 Jones Street, #3152, San Francisco, CA 94102.



LAST TIME

Fuck yes! You punks and skins are in luck! You read glowing reviews of Windsor, Ontario, Canada's DISCO ASSAULT's demo in these pages last year—now you get some raging new material! The great new DISCO ASSAULT *Saturday Night Bleeder* EP is available on the

consistently good Schizophrenic Records out of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. This band plays fast punk. This is street rock 'n' roll with attitude! DISCO ASSAULT starts off with a full head of steam on the first song of side one, "My Fate." The lyrics go like this: "Non-stop party hurts my head / Try to stop before I'm dead / Too far gone—you just can't quit / Non-stop party—too much shit… / Now you're like the living dead / Brickwall is approaching fast / Stay on that road, you're gonna crash / Don't hold me back, it's too late / Don't bring me down, it's my fate." Yes! Now that's a great anthem for the hard-drinking punks and skins! The next song "Work To Survive" will ring true for many of you blue collar labor men and women. "…Cost of living—you're barely alive—work to survive / Rob you of your dignity, take away your pride / Pay you shit for wages – then throw you to the side / The workingman struggles—the company thrives / They drive around in limousines while you work to survive." Those are good working class lyrics! The third song on side A is a spirited cover of "More Beer" by Florida's ROACH MOTEL, circa 1982. Flip this EP over and DISCO ASSAULT hammers you right away with "Homeland Security." This song warns: "Out on the street, you better watch your back / People with morals ready to attack / They have an agenda and it won't be long / Shutting all the doors on those of who don't belong." That's good shit! The last rocking number on this EP is "Asshole Stare." This screaming indictment goes like this: "You don't know me / I'm just another fuckin' face / Don't act like we're old friends / It's real life—this ain't MySpace / Pass you by—same old glare / Pass you by—tough guy stare / You act so hard—I don't care about you / I don't like you—hate your guts every day / Won't try hard but if I can I'll spite you / Hope I can fuckin' ruin your day"! Yes, those are good sentiments to share with some of the assholes you encounter every day. You punks and skins should order this EP. It's great! Write to Schizophrenic Records, 17 West 4th St, Hamilton, ON, L9C 3M2, Canada, www.schizophrenicrex.com.

Holy fuck! Mind Disease Records from Chula Vista, California has two scorching new hardcore 7"s for you fucks! The first thrash masterpiece for you cretins is by a band named COLD STARE. The six-song *Last Time* EP is bristling with old school hardcore venom, brutal vocals and triumphant metal influenced guitar leads. The lead off song "Last Time" conveys a clear message: "You fucked with us once again / We've had it with you and your friends / Coming in here with a mouthful of shit / No one fucking likes you / We're not going to stand for it / Think you're tough—think you're hard / That narrow mind won't get you that far / Get the fuck out, stay out of here / We'll always be here, so don't come near." Now that is a stern warning! We segue into "Back Off" with more pointed lyrics: "You're always criticizing me / Constantly trying to tell me just how I'm supposed to be / I don't need your fucking advice, so back the fuck off / I don't need your guidance, so back the fuck off." Fuck yes! COLD STARE makes their feelings easily understood. The hardcore thrash music grabs you by the throat and pulls you into the pit! You smash through the songs "From The Start," "Words In Your Mouth," and "Just A Trend" to arrive at the final song "Away From Me." Read some of these words: "Every day I wake, I'm filled with all this hate / From everything you do, to everything you say / I can't fucking stand it, it's driving me insane / Get the fuck away from me." Yes! The bitterness positively oozes from that song! COLD STARE is not pleased with the circumstances! This is a great hardcore record! You need this seven-inch at your house!

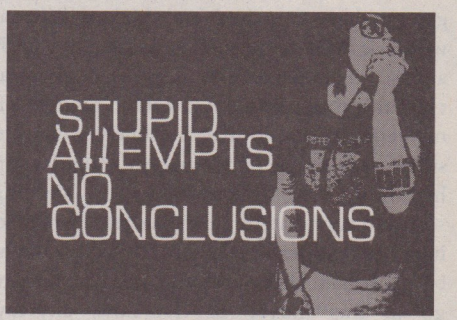
The next salvo dropped on you by Mind Disease Records is the TAKE OFFENSE EP entitled *Peace In Death*. As soon as you view the grim reaper on the front cover and the skinheads on the back cover, you know what's going to transpire! These skins play metal with a flourish! Fans of old school SUICIDAL TENDANCIES will be pleased by this excellent crossover thrash! TAKE OFFENSE leads off with "Life Is A Mess," an instrumental, and then crash right into "Deadline," which contains these uplifting lyrics: "Life has value? Well I'm not worth too much / Still no faith—struggling to keep in touch… / No goals, no future, no hope / I'm walking a deadline." We flip this fine *Peace In Death* EP over and enter right into "Walks Of Life" with a great AGNOSTIC FRONT style of chorus and guitars that might have been influenced by the mighty SLAYER. The lyrics contain opinions about growing up in our society, read on: "Growing up another molded mind / Ideas coming from another kind / Different paths, it's time to chose / It's tough knowing—in the end we all lose… / Working towards a better future, but it won't last / Nothing real left to believe / We'll be left with nothing when we finally leave." These are very bleak lyrics indeed! You storm through "Solitary Pass" and finish off with the title track "Peace In Death." Read this: "Life is chaos, life is a mess / To find peace you must find death… / An endless struggle, a fight to survive / Work for what you've got, work to stay alive / Just take a look around, then take your last breath / The only peace you'll ever find is waiting at the end of your life / Peace In Death"! This TAKE OFFENSE *Peace In Death* EP is an excellent record!! Order this and the COLD STARE *Last Time* EP from Mind Disease Records today!!

You lucky punks! SF Bay Area punks, FIX MY HEAD has unleashed a weapon of punk destruction on you hapless fucks! The new FIX MY HEAD *Empty Slogans* EP on Oakland's No Options Records rages like a motherfucker! In the first song "Fed Up," FIX MY HEAD laments the workers plight—no matter how much you give of yourself management always wants more. Welcome to capitalism! The band's title song "Fix My Head" accurately assesses the plundering of the Earth's resources by the industrialized nations. There's always the double-edged sword—in America we have the money to put out 7" vinyl records that lyrically confront our uneasiness with a capitalistic society. You need to get your message to the kids, and that takes money and resources. The high-energy shrill punk vocals on this slab of vinyl will pierce your secure little punk brain. The loud guitars flail along and the bass and drums besiege you fucks! Order this fucker from: No Options Records, PO Box 22285, Oakland, CA, 94623, USA.

No Options offers MORNE—the heaviest LP to enter the hallowed confines of *Maximum Rocknroll* in many a moon!!! MORNE hails from Boston, Mass. This shit is just dripping with metal barbs. The vocals come from darkest part of the soul. The stench of doom emanates from this slow death knell. If you HELLSHOCK fans want to be very uneasy, please listen to this black masterpiece.

See you around.

See you fucks at the bar.



The Fall of my Discontent—or—The Weirdest and Most Embarrassing Disease I Ever Had—or—Doctors are Fucking Hacks but Who Can Blame Them?

It had to have been November of '07 when all this shit went down. Probably. I remember because it was pretty soon after Halloween, or rather, pretty soon after a Halloween show at my house at which some sweet bands were covered, all lady-fronted: CCR, Minor Threat, and the Ramones.

The Ramones band headlined despite their extreme sketchiness. They didn't think they were going to play and then ended up trying to play spontaneously, despite the singer being on shitty E and the bassist being falling-over drunk—and the fact that they hadn't actually practiced, together, all four of them. The guitarist left in the middle of the set and no one really noticed. There were a lot of awkward

lulls in which the band tried to figure out what they were doing; the audience compensated with a steady stream of crowd-surfing during the silences. I kept shoving my face into the mic and starting songs I knew they hadn't learned because they were going for an artistically obscure set.

So it must have been November when it happened, within the next few weeks after Halloween. It began as a crater on the side of my mouth accompanied by some bumps on my jawline. The night before this eruption I'd accidentally eaten some tomato (my bane, my allergy that is snuck carelessly into everything ever). Half a year earlier, I had eaten some tomatoes and became allergic to the sun for about a week. Like if my forearms were exposed to bright sunlight, the result was these boils: this gnarly Ham On Rye, Bukowski-type shit. Was this related? I didn't know.

Every day, it spread. It felt weird. Tingly. I showed it around the house.

"That's not acne?"

It wasn't acne. It was too quick to scab for that.

I ran into this kid I had rolled hard with around the end of high school. We were both at the local cheap breakfast hipster diner. He wouldn't look at my face. I was disgusting. I immediately went to the closest walk-in clinic.

It's Vancouver, and if you didn't grow up here, you don't have a doctor. No one accepts new patients. Despite what you might have heard from some Michael Moore documentaries about Canada being a utopia of socialized health care, things here are a little fucked too. I think what happens is that doctors are offered a higher salary in America, and therefore, Canadian doctors are enticed to emigrate. I can't blame them, though, because, although university tuition is significantly lower here than it is down there, it's still pretty high, and "financial aid" means you use the Canada Student Loans program—which is actually run by some asshole bank corporation that is hella stoked on the increasing amount of interest you have to pay each month. The amount of debt looming over your head after eight or more years of medical study must be fucking nuts.

So, as I was saying, I didn't have a doctor because there is a shortage of doctors in Vancouver. There were three clinics I would frequent. I usually went to the youth clinic, which I'm eligible to use until my 26th birthday. It was fifteen blocks up the boulevard. As a policy, they are nice, but I was figuring out that they could be a little condescending. Also, they have weird hours.

Sometimes I would go to a drop-in clinic that is open pretty often and right underneath the youth clinic, but that one's iffy. It's okay if, say, you know exactly what is wrong with you and what will cure it. Like if you had a UTI but now it's really bad and your lower back hurts, so you know it's a kidney infection and can just ask for the appropriate antibiotics. Or, say, if you were bitten by a baby rat at the donut dumpster and need a tetanus shot. The big problem with that one, though, the Care Point clinic, is that you'll always get the liver-spotted old doctor who resents having to do STD tests. The man who once, when I was in getting some "I got hurt at work" forms signed, thought I was a dude, I think because I don't shave my legs.

So. On this day—the day my face disease was spread around a significant portion of the left side of my face—I went to the clinic right by my house, the Care Heart Clinic or something. The receptionist is a total dick. She will treat you like you are complete garbage, which is not what you want when you are sickly and need sympathy. But I use this one if I'm trying to avoid the outside world as much as I can because I don't have to walk far. My doctor was young and hip and attractive. He looked like Rivers Cuomo in business casual. I looked disgusting.

I pointed at my face.

"Impetigo," he said.

"Really?" I said.

"Oh, for sure."

He was starting to write me up a prescription.

"Um."

"What else would it be?" he asked.

What I didn't want to say was: Dude, I've had impetigo. Twice. I'm a punk house-living, travel-y punk scumbag. This is different. The whole vibe is different. I don't want to insult your long university training and expertise, but can you not do some swab tests?

I said, "Okay," kind of sarcastically. I took the prescription and left.

In the next few days, it got worse, as I was popping the antibiotics. I kept showing it around the house.

"Well, it looks less angry but it's definitely spreading."

"Dude, it's getting really close to your eye."

I went back to the other clinic, the youth drop-in one. Okay, they were nice. But, as I said, I was getting increasingly weary of that one too. A few months back, I had come back from a five-week North American tour seriously really sick. The sickness started before I left and got bad pretty early in the tour; I'd get my period like crazy, oh, every three days or so, but I thought it was just from traveling with lots of ladies or something. I ended every set with a throbbing pain in my abdomen I would ignore.

When I got home, I went to this clinic and was told that I had pelvic inflammatory disease, that it was really bad and at risk of spreading into my whole abdomen, and that I needed to take pills to kill off all possible causes of my affliction, including the ones for Chlamydia and gonorrhea.

Okay, listen. I don't want to be a dick and act like having those STIs would be deplorable and there's no way I would have them, like, ew, gross. Because the reality is that if you are fucking outside of a completely monogamous partnership (and we all know that monogamy is for squares, duh), you could contract those infections. But, guys, it's the '90s or whatever, and I get tested on the regular and so do my partners. And I practice safer sex, and with the math and figuring out whom I had done it with lately and when they were tested and when I was tested, I was positive I did not have those afflictions. And the antibiotics for STIs are fucking harsh—they are important when you have these STIs, obviously, but aren't the best for your body in general. They tend to wipe out any bacteria in your body altogether, even the good ones, therefore wreaking havoc on your digestive and immune system. However, I wasn't a doctor and she was, and did I want to die? I was weak. I was sick. I took them.

So when my test results came back and it turned out that I didn't have those things, I wanted to punch her in the face. Except it was a different smiley-authority youth doctor. Fuck that clinic. But when my face-melting was clearly misdiagnosed by the Care Heart and I was too unsure to try the Care Point, I didn't know where else to go.

By this time, I had been into the youth clinic at least twice a month that fall. I mean, they were clearly idiots, but at least they knew I was girl and didn't really lecture me. They were starting to get annoyed with me, though. Like I was being a hypochondriac because I had both a serious uterine infection and a series of painful red scabs all over my face in one season. Oh, and I had gotten hit by a car right around the beginning of October and had needed a doctor's referral to get physiotherapy because it wasn't enough for me to say "I fell on my right side and now can't use my right hand." to warrant some sort of medical care for this. I needed a doctor to write that down for me.

"What is it this time?"

"Look at my face."

"Oh, that's new?"

By then, my whole face was covered. It was bubbling.

"Yeah, this is a recent development."

"Hmmm…"

"Can you test my face for herpes?"

"That's not herpes."

I recounted for her the Halloween show episode. How I kept shoving my mouth into a microphone being used by my friend who had a cold sore she was trying to cover up with lipstick. How the last dude I had kissed was claiming to never have had a mouth herpes outbreak in his life, but clearly had this thing on his lip.

("Well, what's that?" I had asked him, pointing. "A fever blister!" he answered, indignantly.)

(Fever blister: synonymous with cold sore; what people say when they don't want to associate their mouth thing with the crotch-y sexually transmitted disease.)

I explained these things to her. I patiently told her that I would like to be tested for either strain of herpes, because this thing was taking over my face and I would like to have the appropriate tests and then the appropriate treatments.

She said, "We don't really have a test for herpes."

"Bullshit!"

That was what Billy said. I ran into him outside the clinic. "Go to the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control." That was his clinic of choice. They meant business there.

But going there entailed a bus ride. Fuck. A good test for figuring out how much you actually care what the general public thinks of you, like how much you've embraced the "Fuck it, who cares, I'm punk" philosophy is to try being the scabby mess of a face on public transportation.

The BC Centre for Disease Control is a drop-in establishment, although it is "recommended you make an appointment." When I got there was told I couldn't be seen, that it was booked up. In case this happens to you, I recommend bursting into tears, saying, "There's something really wrong with my face." They might agree to try to squeeze you in.

After a few hours of some *Reader's Digest*, maybe some *People* magazine, I was in a room with a light shining in my face and three doctors squinting at me, humming and hawing. I mentioned the herpes thing. One of the lady doctors had the classic light bulb reaction—a lighting-up of eyes. I think she even pointed into the air, said, "Ah-ha!" and ran to the library to find a textbook.

"*Eczema Herpeticum!*" She was excited. So was I. She showed me a picture of a face striking similarity to mine: a dark, brownish-red spotting on someone's cheek, and asked if I had a problem with eczema. I listed off my allergies which will cause my skin to break out into rash: tomatoes, walnuts, chamomile, Herbal Essences shampoo, making out with people who use anti-dandruff shampoo, any kind of incense, cologne, perfume, too much dairy.

I guess if you have a herpes simplex outbreak (and especially if it's your first outbreak, which tends to be the craziest because your immune system doesn't know what the fuck is going on) concurrently with an eczema outbreak, the two afflictions can join forces and take over the surface of your skin. It's rare, but it happens, and it can be fatal because of the amount of area of your body that can become an open wound! Cool.

After some swab tests and a giant paper sack of Valtrex, I was on my way to health. Two days later, my face was clearing up. My faith in modern medicine was restored! Herpes Simplex 1! No big deal! All I had to deal with now was my shoulder that had, muscularly, ripped off the rest of my body. I waltzed to my local physio office.

"I have an appointment with Carrie."

"Um, Carrie isn't in today. But Daniel will fill in."

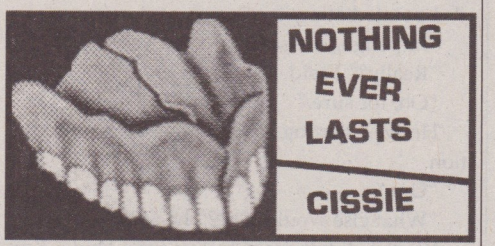
"…Okay…"

I looked around the office. It was empty save for some suits milling around, taking notes. No physiotherapists, no other patients.

"He's just in a meeting right now," the receptionist said, gesturing towards a curtained-off area from which there were some raised voices: *"You can't lie to me! We have the proof! How can you have billed these appointments when you were in Alaska!"*

I looked at the receptionist. She shrugged. Fuck. Trust no one. Eat more garlic. Get in touch.

julsgeneric@hotmail.com



I'm in the right mind to have someone ghost write my column for me. I've never been able to find anyone that would take me up on that offer though. I've been dealing with the flu and its after effects for over a week and finishing this column is about the last thing I want to do right now.

So, you're reading the health issue and I've been several kinds of ill since compiling it. Maybe it's placed some sort of curse on me. If that's true—and I *am* superstitious—I won't be well until I finish this issue, so I have to keep typing this column. Ugh.

A few weeks ago I was chomping on some sugar-filled something-or-other when a chunk of one of my teeth came out. Turns out it was a filling and decay has been building up around it for the last several years, and that spells r-o-o-t c-a-n-a-l—in other words, fun. I'm going to the UCSF dental school because I don't have insurance and it's less expensive than most private practice dentists. I'll refrain from stating that it's cheap because that's not the nature of root canals, dental school or not. Root canals are always expensive; the one that I'll be receiving is less so than your average dentist. Whatever, my teeth suck from years of careless soda consumption coupled with avoiding the dentist. It's all my fault. It was worth it. I wouldn't change a thing.

The flu, that's not my fault. I'd like to figure out who gave it to me and jab them in the eyeballs 100 times, if only to mirror the feeling of the sinus infection that sprung up after most of the other flu symptoms had subsided. I suppose I might've passed it on to someone along the way too. Sorry if I did.

Anyway, yeah, this is the health issue and I'm not all that well. At 31 I feel like I'm getting old, and I haven't had insurance my entire adult life. I kind of hate health. I hate thinking about it because treating it isn't much of an option in my world. Although, I've been lucky, I've had two surgeries since the age of 24, and I haven't had to pay much out of pocket.

Someone, elsewhere in this issue, mentions that hospitals have assistance programs to help the uninsured cover their emergency bills. These programs have been referred to as "charity funds" at the hospitals I've landed in. I signed up for this both times I needed emergency surgery and got covered 80 percent of the first stay and 100 percent of the second. The hospital stay, food, IV, morphine, emergency room fee, and all that sort of stuff were covered, but the doctor's bill is a separate fee. I've always had to pay the full amount to the doctor.

The first bill I never got around to paying. Even with the discount it was still really expensive at $8000, it would've been over $30,000 in full. I was hit by a Chevy Suburban while riding my bike home from work, and my lower leg turned to "mush," as the doctor called it. He was a hack. While placing the staples in my bone he cut my leg up like it was someone's turkey feast and one of the stitches popped open while my cast was still on. This wasn't discovered until he took my cast off two months later.

Furthermore I wasn't able to walk for nine months because for the six months that I went to his office he told me the leg was broken—it was supposed to heal in eight weeks—and then he refused to see me because I never paid him. I went to the county and that took a few more months just to be seen at all, but it was free and they gave me the good word to start walking again. I have no clue if my doctor was lying to me about my leg still being broken for as long as it was, but he just seemed so oblivious that I didn't always believe him. He never wanted to answer any of my questions. "I cannot answer that question." Fuck, what do they pay you do? Why do your expect me to pay you when you can't answer a simple question about whether or not my leg is gonna fall off because of this two-inch wide abscess, which is your sloppy-handed ass fault? I think that if the bone was still broken after six months it was because he didn't staple the shit together right. I mean, how many people have broken legs for nine months. My sorry ass. Ugh. This is such a

whine bonanza, but what are you gonna do? Most doctors are douches. And this episode of my life happened over seven years ago…I've mostly gotten over it; I'm only slightly bitter now.

The second time I ended up in the hospital and needed emergency surgery was much less traumatizing. The doctors and nurses were nice and I even got a couple cable channels on the TV. The hospital bill was $10,000, but the charity fund covered all of it, and the doctor's bill was a little over $2500, which I paid in monthly installments. I had a decent paying job at the time and I was able to take care of it in a year. No problem.

I honestly didn't even think I'd go down this road. I didn't really want to tell my personal health story, but whatever I'm sick and tired, and the stream just came out. There's a whole bunch more of stories similar in tone to this just past the middle of the issue. Enjoy, take care, stay well, you catch my drift. Gimme free health insurance!

cissie@maximumrocknroll.com

My year-end top ten did not include any reissues so here are my selections. I like olden times. The olden days. Tape it to go.

0-Die Kreuzen LP (Touch and Go)

My favorite hardcore LP finally reissued on vinyl. Someone made me a tape of this when I was first getting into hardcore, and I lost it, and don't think I actually listened to it until five or so years ago, when I was digging through my old tapes before I moved here from England. As soon as I heard it I got totally consumed and had this weird feeling of loss because it took me so long to discover the record. I don't think I can explain it without sounding corny, but the sound is so mysterious and indefinable. Makes you feel part of something and totally separate from everything at the same time.

1-Dave E and the Cool Marriage Counselors 7" (Christmas Pets)

Dave E sang for the Electric Eels. I got a tape this year that had more Dave E music from the same period, (early '80s) though not enough. I am not sure if this is a legit reissue or what—the b-side features a small radio interview with him where he asserts that he has a record coming out on Christmas Pets records, and this is on Christmas Pets records… But I think it's a boot? Christmas Pets. Christmas Pets. 'Searching Through Sears' is a slumping punk drugstore serenade, an incantation of long gone discount store advertisements that makes no sense yet is a comment on everything. I like nearly all post Electric Eels sounds and someone needs to boot/reissue legitimately the rest of the Dave E tapes.

2-Ultimo Resorte (La Vida Es Un Mus)

SO FUCKING DREAMY.Perfect. Her vocals gimme chills , the music too. Destruction. I reviewed this last month, but in short this band made perfect fast hardcore, then swicthed to this doomy punk sound. That makes it sound like some cheesy SoCal post-hardcore goth phase, but it's not. To have their output on one record is the best, the liner notes are great. This band was one of the best things I discovered at *MRR* when I first started working here.

3-Nixe (Polly Magoo)

Exuberant Dutch lady punk, that's punker than any of those girls on Rough Trade records from the same era, it'll give you the same feelings you get from listening to those 7"s. You know—secret society of girls, bratty punk underground, shit you need to hear so you can start your own girls in the garage attack. Please do–I heard there's a Nixe inspired band of ladies in NYC already–the time is yours ladies, get the record, start a band!

4-Animals and Men (Mississippi)

Originally heard on the *Messthetics* comps, this is a complete discography LP of the ultimate DIY tape underground band, who refused to sell out, refusing to tour with Adam Ant, and refusing to travel by any other means but bike and train. This is super great serious yet eccentric punk, with tough girl vocals that are cool rather than 'hard'. Sort of reminds me of some C86 stuff somehow, but that might just be the tape underground nature of the band and sound? It's not twee by any stretch.

5-Maniax (Maniaxmusic.com)

Fresno teenage boom box thrash, that was on the first MRR comp, in that era *Thrasher* magazine—the songs are bursts of collapsing in on themselves, teenage garage punk sound! Truth.

6-Delerium Tremens (La Vida Es Un Mus)

Paco has kind of had a perfect year of releasing records in my eyes, new shit and reissues on the same level of greatness. This is the Basque country equivalent to Maniax basement thrash maybe? I don't know about that though. I fucking love old Spanish punk, so desperate, so raging and out of control. This shit sounds like it's gonna burst your ear drums, like they're gonna break your stupid shitty record player, tape player and brains. I heard that they recorded these tapes to order, so if someone wrote them for a tape they recorded the whole tape for them live in their practice space, rather than just like dubbing from an original. I love that idea. So every tape was a different one!

7-One Last Wish (Dischord)

I am so so so psyched this came out on vinyl. This was one of those holy grail tapes when I was a teenager that I finally got, with I think the Rain LP on the other side. I was warned that it was going to be a disappointment, especially since the Rites of Spring LP is pretty perfect in my eyes. But I guess that warning just made me see it in a different light. I like the weirdo basement rev-summer psyche-out attempts contained on this. It makes me think of hanging out with my friends when I was a kid, going skating, sneaking round town on trains with no tickets, Crouch End vert ramp, disused railway lines=kid hideaway… Nostalgia. It's a killer. So's having this on vinyl instead of a ratty old tape, and that weird digipack CD that came out a few years back.

8-Kaos 7" (Sintemores/Odio los Discos/Discos Huayno Amargo)

Peruvian punk. I didn't top ten this when it came out; I have no idea why. It fucking rules. Frantic Peruvian hardcore from the mid '80s with the most savage vocals. This is just raging, Martin put out a classic Peruvian punk record with the Leuzemia LP, but this is more up my street. It's just so fucking good, so wild sounding.

9-Shit SA (BCore)

Uh, even more damaged than the aforementioned Delerium Tremens? Maybe. Maybe not. They had a track on the *Peace* comp. More blown out Barce-punk for your tired ears.

10-The Rats (Mississippi)

The first LP on vinyl, hopefully they're gonna release them all? Fred and Toody Cole were easily the coolest couple I have ever talked to. They compliment each other perfectly musically. Someone needs to reissue the Toody Cole solo 7" now!

ALSO! Cold Sweat LP and Bum Kon LP! There's no more room!

This issue was supposed to come out a couple months ago, but you know, punk time. But here it is now. We got so many contributions that we'll be continuing to run them throughout the year, so if you wrote something and don't see it, it'll run at some point this year… Also, I am not sure if it's explicit enough but this is a tribute to Lance Hahn, who inspired the idea. And whom we all miss very much. We got Tim Kerr and Rich Jacobs to collaborate on the cover art—Rich said that the patterns he drew were inspired by a conversation he had with Biscuit, so it's a true Austin Mutant Rock Big Boys collision. The idea that your income and class decides whether or not you have access to decent health care is fucking immoral, and free health care, a basic human right, is one of the things I miss most about living in England. Anyway, off the pigs, FTW, world's a tomb and so forth.

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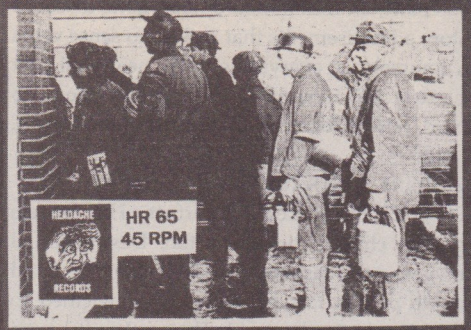
PRINTING AND REPLICATION FOR INDEPENDENT RECORD LABELS AND BANDS SINCE 1994

THE WRETCHED ONES



SIDE A: "RUT" / SIDE B: "LADY BOSS"

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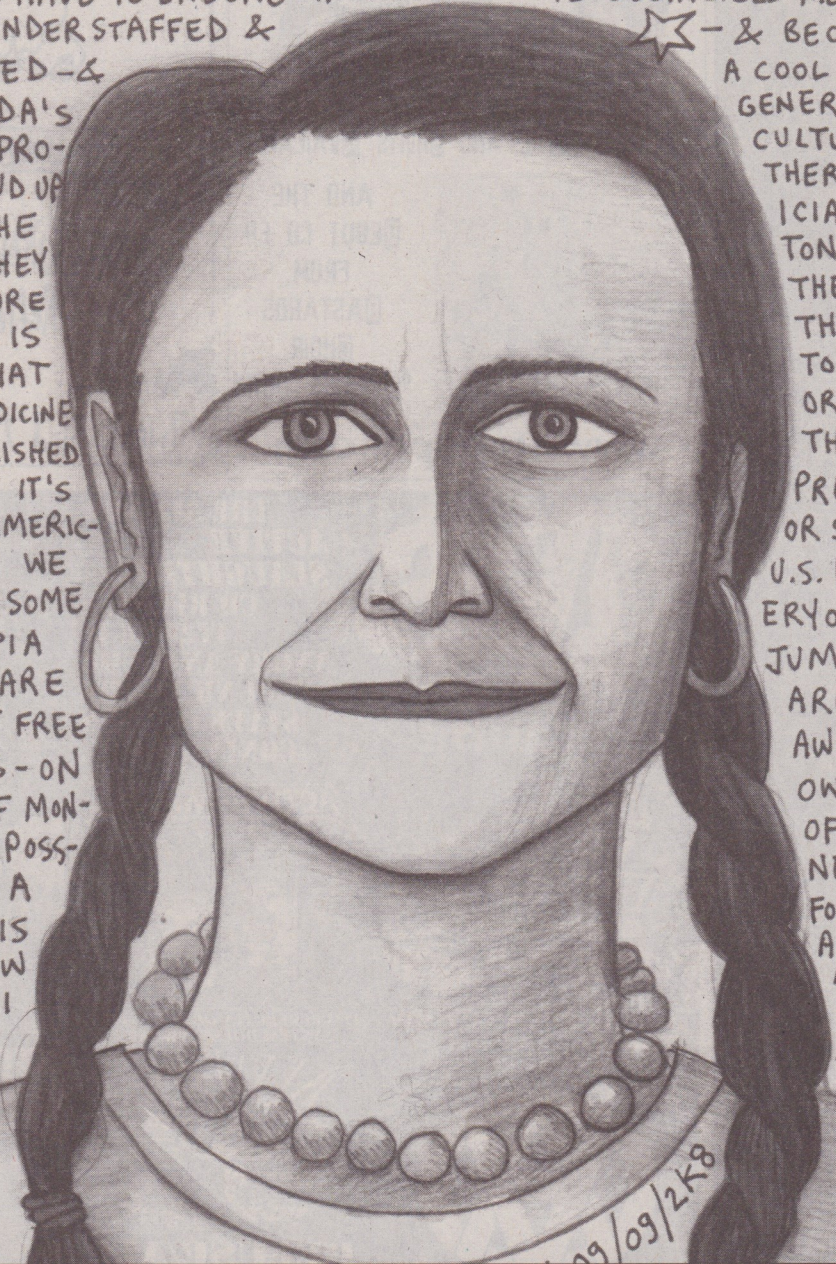
SO I WAS STAYING IN THIS SQUAT IN SAN FRANCISCO & THIS GIRL HAD HIDDEN SOME MONEY IN THE WALL - WHEN SHE REALIZED IT WAS MISSING SHE GOT REALLY PISSED OFF & PUNCHED THE WINDOW & CUT HER HAND OPEN - SO THEN OF COURSE SHE WAS FREAKING OUT SCREAMING "I HAVE NO MONEY TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL" - OF COURSE IN CANADA IF YOU HAVE A HEALTH CARD YOU CAN GET STITCHES FOR FREE - YOU MIGHT HAVE TO WAIT 8 HOURS OR MORE BUT IT WON'T COST YOU ANYTHING - WHEN I WAS 19 MY BICYCLE WHEEL GOT CAUGHT IN A STREET CAR TRACK - I WENT FLYING OVER THE HANDLE BARS & LANDED ON MY HEAD - ONE THING I LEARNED FROM THAT INCIDENT (BESIDES THAT I SHOULD WEAR A HELMUT) IS THAT YOU SHOULD NEVER ACCEPT AN AMBULANCE RIDE BECAUSE EVEN IN CANADA THAT'S NOT FREE - & YEARS LATER I WOULD LEARN THAT EVEN THOUGH THERE IS SUCH THING AS A FREE ABORTION - YOU'RE MUCH BETTER OFF SHELLING OUT $500 TO GET IT DONE IN A PRIVATE CLINIC BECAUSE WITHIN THE SOCIALIZED MEDICAL SYSTEM THERE'S NO END TO RED TAPE, WAITING & THE HUMILIATION THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO ENDURE - IN ALOT OF WAYS SOCIALIZED MEDICINE IS LIKE PUBLIC EDUCATION - UNDERSTAFFED & OVERBURDENED - & MANY OF CANADA'S MOST GIFTED PROFESSIONALS END UP WORKING IN THE U.S. WHERE THEY CAN MAKE MORE MONEY - WHICH IS NOT TO SAY THAT SOCIALIZED MEDICINE SHOULD BE ABOLISHED - JUST THAT IT'S WRONG FOR AMERICANS TO THINK WE ARE LIVING IN SOME KIND OF UTOPIA WHERE THEY ARE HANDING OUT FREE INSULIN SHOTS - ON THE ISLAND OF MONTREAL IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND A DOCTOR WHO IS TAKING NEW PATIENTS - I DON'T HAVE A DOCTOR



- & BECAUSE MONTREAL HAS A COOL MUSIC SCENE & IS GENERALLY A LAID BACK CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT THERE ARE A LOT OF MUSICIANS FROM NYC & BOSTON WHO MOVE THERE FOR THE SUMMER THINKING THEY WILL GET SIGNED TO CONSTELLATION RECORDS OR WHAT NOT - THIS WAS ESPECIALLY PREVALENT IN THE YEAR OR SO FOLLOWING THE LAST U.S. ELECTION WHEN EVERYONE WAS READY TO JUMP SHIP - A LOT OF US ARE THINKING "STAY AWAY!! GO FIX YOUR OWN COUNTRY!" WHICH OF COURSE YOU WOULD NEVER SAY TO A RWANDAN FOR INSTANCE - BUT AN AMERICAN? COME ON! LUCKILY THE WINTERS IN MONTREAL ARE BRUTAL & MOST PEOPLE CAN'T HANDLE IT!

09/09/2K8

ALEXIS O'HARA- 09/09/2K8 - LOWER EAST SIDE NYC

I HAVE KNOWN ALEXIS FOR OVER 20 YEARS NOW - WE DID TIME TOGETHER BACK IN THE 1980S AT THE PURPLE INSTITUTION (DON'T ASK) - & DID SOME CRAZY STUFF IN NYC IN 1990 INCLUDING SEVERAL SHOWS AT ABC NO RIO - ALEXIS IS A TRUELY AMAZING SPOKEN WORD ARTIST & MUSICIAN & ALL ROUND FCKN AWESOME HUMAN CURRENTLY LIVING IN MONTREAL CANADIA - I DREW THIS PEOPS LAST SUMMER WHEN SHE WAS IN NYC PERFORMING AT THE HOWL FEST & ALSO AT THE BOWERY POETRY CLUB - I WANTED HER TO TALK ABOUT CANADIAN HEALTH CARE BECUZ THERE ARE MANY MISCONCEPTIONS - BUT SHE DOES SO MANY OTHER THINGS BESIDES TALKING ABOUT HEALTHCARE!! - YOU CAN FIND HER ON MYSPACE (SORRY - I HATE MYSPACE - BUT WUTEVER) -WWW.MYSPACE.COM/ALEXISOHARA - SHE IS ALSO COLLABORATING ON A PROJECT YOU CAN SEE AT 52PICKUPVIDEOS.COM - OR EMAIL: ELLEX6@GMAIL.COM - TO CONTACT FLY PLEASE EMAIL: FLY@BWAY.NET (PUT MRR IN THE SUBJECT SO I KNOW ITS NOT SPAM) - OUT OF DATE WEBSITE IS WWW.BWAY.NET/~FLY - SNAIL ADDRESS: FLY PO BOX 1318 COOPER STN NYC NY 10276 USA - FOR FLY ZINES CHECK WWW.MICROCOSMPUBLISHING.COM & STAY TUNED FOR NEW FLY BOOKS ON PM PRESS - WWW.PMPRESS.ORG

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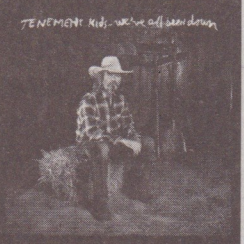
Gewapend Beton - Emty Batteries 12" EP / CD

These dutch embryo hardcore-punks have done it again! Six songs of perfect blazing hardcore-punk with an intensity which proves that after all their batteries are fully charged! EP out on Crucial Attack / La Familia. CD On Crucial Attack.

Tenement Kids - We've All Been Down LP

If the music industry is so completely overrun by mediocrity and greed, there's not a better way to get saved then by the sound something true every once in a while. Good music. Honest music. Something like the Tenement Kids. We've all been down. Music saves!
For fans of Hot Water Music, The Draft, Leatherface.

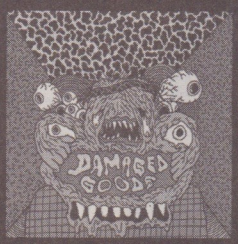


Strike First - Gospels For The Deceived LP/CD

No hypes, no trends, just pure impact! Since their foundation in 2003, Strike First have been doing what they like best. Balance on the fine line between oldschool hardcore and heavy trashmetal! Strike First blends R.J.'s haunting roars with blazing guitar riffs, solos and crushing drum beats to create another 25 minutes of pure rage. Killer!

Damaged Goods - Fever LP

Belgiums trashers of Damaged Goods are back with 10 songs on the Fever LP. After a solid EP on Not Just Words Records and playing shows across Europe With 10 songs clocking in below 14 minutes, Fever is faster and with more crazy guitar riffing the friction will drive you insane. Split release between Crucial Attack and Crashlanding Records.



Bratpack - Hate The Neighbours LP/CD

Hailing from the eastern part of The Netherlands comes a band that you would expect from the western and sunny side of California. Melodic punkrock that sounds like RKL, Adolescents, Bad Religion and Stalag 13 thrown into a blender. Co-operation between Crucial Attack / Dirty Faces / Hako Bastards.

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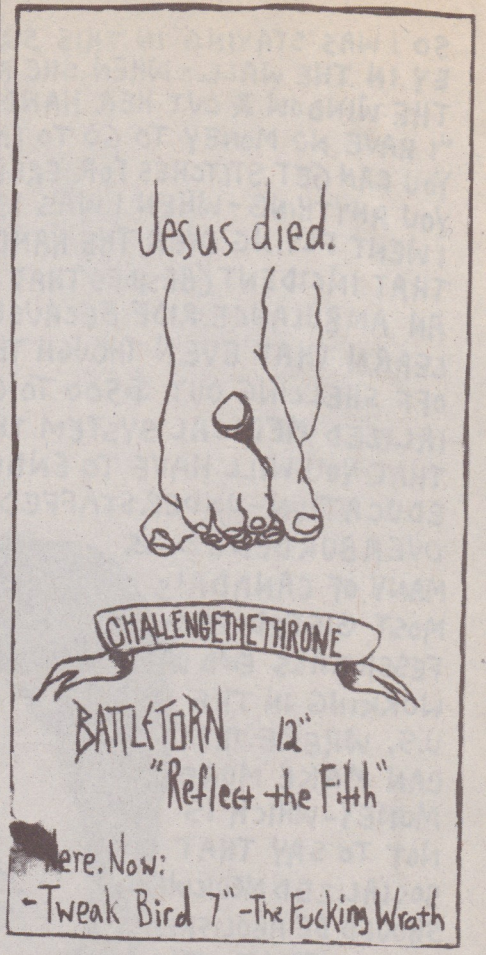

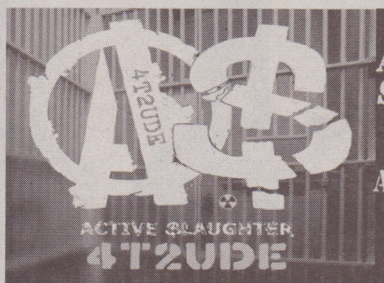

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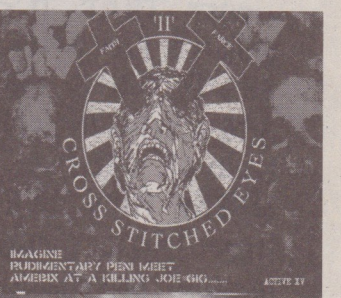

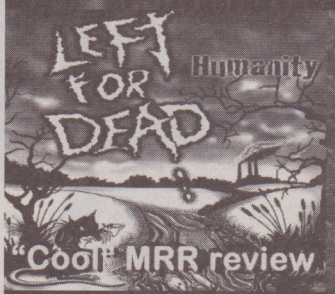

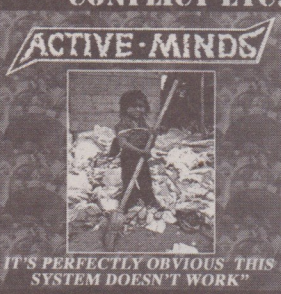

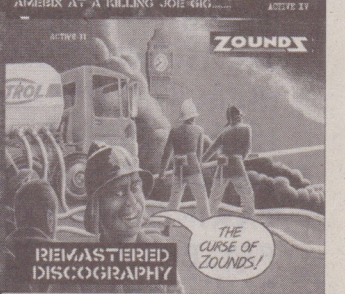

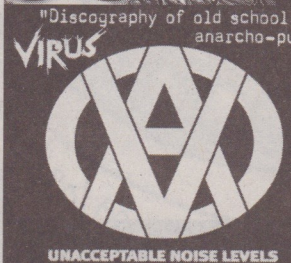

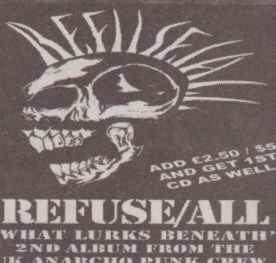

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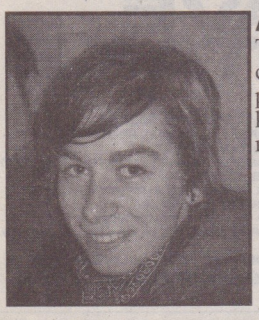
MRR asks YOU:

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?

This month's question: What's your worst pit injury or drug freakout story? (asked at the Total Fury show at Gilman on January 2nd)

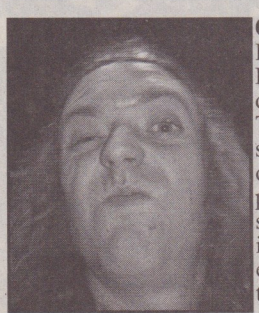
Anton, 23, San Francisco
My friend ate too many mushrooms, saw nothing but the color yellow for half an hour, and he could say was "I had few too many mushrooms, I had few too many mushrooms." I told him he needed to chill, and so he listened to The Cars and watched trees dance for three hours, and it was the only thing that made him feel better



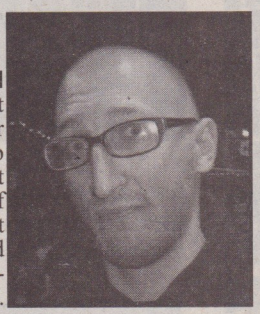
Ainé, 18, Richmond Hills
There was a Rabies show at Gilman a couple of years ago, and I obviously wasn't paying enough attention, and a stagediver kneed me in the nose. It hurt for two months and now it's crooked.

Mike, 19, Arcata
My roommate was dealing with a vial of acid, and it was wet all over the bag, and somehow he took between between ten and twenty hits. We came back from a party and he started freaking out because there were too many people, and he went in his room, stripped naked, and started screaming that he was dying and that he wanted to kill everyone.

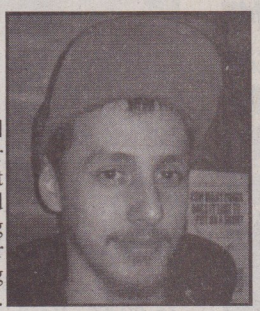
Evan, 24, San Francisco
The first and only time I took shrooms, I went camping in the woods, and we were hitting golf balls with our golf clubs. All of a sudden, a man comes out of nowhere, tells us "the bees are coming," and a swarm of bees comes and stings us all over, and we go to the hospital, and it sucked, and it's the only time I ever did shrooms.



Graham, 29, Oakland
I did 4 or 5 tabs of this crazy acid in Europe, and watched this WWII marathon on TV for 3 hours and then went outside. The US Embassy happened to be down the street, and the European architecture kind of looked like what we'd watched. At one point I thought I was in Nazi Germany, I saw tanks coming at me, heard dogs barking, and people yelling in German. We ended up running around the city at 3AM thinking the military was gonna kill us.

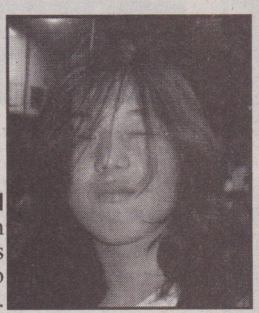


XYosefX, 28, Oakland
The last time I took LSD, I took about 5,000 micrograms, which is about 40 or 50 hits as they're laid today. I ended up tripping for a couple days straight, and at one point I was growing little versions of myself out of myself by the thousands, that were slowly consuming my body. And that's when I decided never to do psychedelics again.

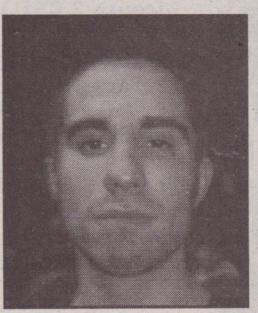


Justin, 20, Bakersfield
Toxic Narcotic was playing about four or five years ago, and I got so drunk that I puked all over the girls' bathroom and passed out, and my friends were playing tug of war with me, and I puked all over them. I didn't know where I was for a long time, and I woke up with food all over me.

Liz, 23, nowhere
I was at this shitty "hahd-coah" show in a place in Hamilton, New Zealand called "Hamtown Smackdown," and I was dancing away to this band called Guest Stabs Host, and some dude comes running at me and spin kicks me in the arm. I blacked out and ran out of the room, I stand out there for a while, and someone came out and made me a sling from their T-shirt. I go to the hospital, but they wouldn't see me for a few hours, so I went back to the show.



Jun, 20, Richmond
I wasn't at the show, but my friend fell in the pit and somehow broke both his wrists at the same time. And he's a drummer, so it's even funnier.



Anthony, 21, San Francisco
One time I did salvia, and all of a sudden, everyone around me started turning into fruit. One friend turned into a watermelon, another turned into a peach. And then my wall became the background of my computer screen, which at the time was a grassy valley with the sun rising behind it.

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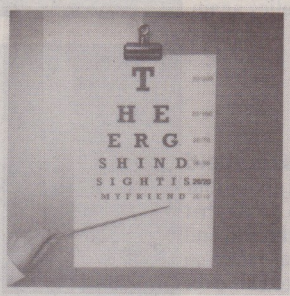
Marked Men - Ghosts LP/CD their best one yet. no shit.



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2008 MRR STAFF PICKS

CAROLYN KEDDY

Here's the only Top Ten list you need for 2008. The only one that gets it right.

1. It's a tie!

DAVILA 666 – LP (In The Red)

The handsome rock 'n' roll boys from Puerto Rico really get my blood boiling every time I put this one on the stereo, and that happens at least once a day. Raucous garage rock with the daring and confidence to include not only the '60s and '70s influences, but the '80s and '90s as well. This record is just so fantastic. From the opening howl through the stomping garage anthems to wild sing-alongs to a couple of slowish, shoegazing ballads, Davila 666 does it all. And it works so well. There seem to be so many genres represented yet it all is combined into one exciting style. I just can't say enough good things about this. It's brilliant, raw, and alive.

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING "Primary Colours" LP (Aarght! / Goner)

The second album from Australia's EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING gets everything right. A perfect collection of classic Australian punk sounds blended with some post-punkish elements to make a very unique and wonderful aural experience. This record seems more introspective than their previous releases, mostly due to Brendan Suppression's low, alluring vocals. He even manages to make an ode to television sound romantic. Of course, that voice would be nothing without the fabulous music this band produces backing it up. The rhythms come across as effortless and the guitar playing is flawless. It all combines together in the most perfect way. This record gets better and more interesting with every play. I already know it will go down as one of the classics of the '00s and rightly so.

3. GUINEA WORMS – "Box of Records/I'm a Cobweb" (Columbus Discount)

The A-side "Box Of Records" is about all the people who work at MRR and all the people who read it. Face it, if you are bothering to read this list and you are interested in it than to you there really is nothing better than a box of records. It's an ode to vinyl obsession that humorously remembers to include a small tribute to the singer's girlfriend, which accidentally turns into a comparison with a box of records. Sing it! "There's really nothing better, there's really nothing better, there's really nothing better than a box of records." Side B is equally catchy though less blatant. There is squeaky saxophone too.

4. MAYYORS – "Metro/Fatigue" (Waste of Oil) and "Megan's LOLZ" EP (Gomerdome)

The Mayyors play loud, thrashy hardcore garage rock. Is that really a possibility? I guess it is now. The music is overblown, but in the best possible way. There is feedback on every song, but just enough and always in the appropriate place. Yet, there is always a melody. This unique combination of sounds is providing some very exciting music. You really need to hear it.

5. THE DIRTBOMBS – "We Have You Surrounded" LP (In The Red)

Album number four from the Dirtbombs and I don't ever want them to stop. Garage rock that is so soulful and modern. Catchy, danceable, and it puts a smile on my face. Plus any band that can cover Sparks, Dead Moon, and Alan Moore seamlessly on the same album making the songs their own deserves your appreciation. Give it to them.

6. CONTAMINATORS – LP (Going Underground)

This record encompasses everything I enjoy about punk rock. Uncomplicated tunes with an annoyed and/or bored vocalist that are crudely recorded. Songs titles "Drivin' Me Crazy," "No Friends," "Sick Society," and "Ain't So Fun" add more attitude to the mix. This is the type of LP someone will dig up twenty years from now and proclaim as one of the lost gems of 2008. Why wait for some other jerk to tell you later—listen to me now. This album rules. Plus Contaminators were one of the best live bands I saw this past year.

7. TY SEGALL – LP (Castle Face), "Skin" EP (Goodbye Boozy), & "Here We Go" EP (Chocolate Covered)

There was a point when I was the *MRR* resident one-man band expert. But then I became disillusioned with the genre. All these one-man bands were starting to sound too similar and uninteresting. Fortunately, Ty Segall has renewed my love for the one-man band. Stomping garage tunes that are dirty and distorted and rollicking and so much fun. I just can't get enough.

8. THE GET OFFS – "Airplane Fight! / Drunk" (Pearson / Meggitt Music)

Two perfect gems of garage pop. The songs are full of humor and fun. Very catchy, but way too brief. But I guess you always want to leave 'em wanting more.

9. HANK IV – "Refuge in Genre" LP (Siltbreeze)

Hank IV singer Bob usually gets mad at me (and I assume he will again for putting this into print) for mentioning that time at the bar when I asked him about recording this album. "I should never talk to the press" I think is what he has repeatedly said. I told him he sounds really pissed off on this album and I like it. He said during recording, the rest of the band would purposefully rile him up until he was really mad then send him in to the do the vocals. Whatever truth there is in that story, it really works. The songs sound angry, but in the best possible way. I can relate. Plus the music is really rockin' and the lyrics are peculiar and very entertaining.

10. PERSONAL AND THE PIZZAS – "I Don't Wanna Be No Personal Pizza" EP (Search and Destroy)

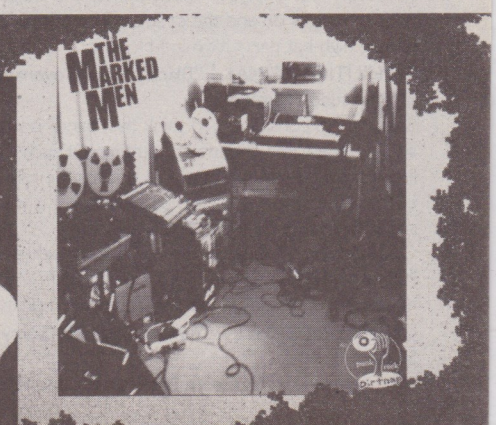
Without a doubt, the winner for the best packaging of a record. A 7" packed in a mini pizza box with a t-shirt, button and poster. Yes, that *is* Iggy Pop eating a slice on the cover. Yeah, it is a funny gimmick, but behind all that is some good rock 'n' roll, Ramones-style. The guy from New Jersey and his Pizzas may come off as unintelligent, but some of the lyrics are very clever. I always crack up at the rhyming of "J.O.B." with "G.E.D." in the song "I Can Read." I am easily amused.

Honorable Mentions: (I can't be limited to just ten!)

CANDY SNATCHERS – "Doin' Time / Dead Wrong" (Zodiac Killer)
HEARTBEEPS – "A Boring Life With No Guitar" EP (Frantic City)
BRAINBOMBS – "Fucking Mess" LP (Lystring)
WAX MUSEUMS – LP (Douche Master)
LITTLE CLAW – "Race To The Bottom / Feeding You" (Siltbreeze)
NODZZZ – "I Don't Wanna (Smoke Marijuana) / We Are The Only Animals" (Make A Mess)
SO COW – "Commuting" EP (Going Underground)
PLEASURE KILLS – "Smash Up The Radio / Over and Over" (Polypore)
YOUNG OFFENDERS – "Big Man, Small House / Saints" (Deranged)
KRYSMOPOMPAS – "Heute Schlafen – Morgen Aufwachen" LP (S-S)

Best Reissues:

THE NIXE – LP (Polly Maggoo)
THE RATS – LP (Mississippi)
BUM KON – "Drunken Sex Sucks" LP (Smooch / MRR)
SUBHUMANS – "Death Was Too Kind" LP (Alternative Tentacles)
FIGURES OF LIGHT – "Smash Hits" LP (Norton)
ANIMALS AND MEN "Never Bought Never Sold" LP (Mississippi)
LIGHTNING BEAT-MAN & HIS NO TALENT – "Wrestling Rock 'n' Roll" LP (Voodoo Rhythm)
DICTATORS – "Every Day Is Saturday" LP (Norton)



JUSTIN BRIGGS

Bottom line: 2008 was a work-filled blur interspersed with hangovers. At least a bunch of weirdos, losers, and assholes were kind enough to make the following records:

EPs:

KRIEGSHÖG – "Hardcore Hell" EP (originally released on Hardcore Survives, now available on HeartFirst)

Hands down the best new band on Earth. Perfectly executed, noisy D-beat crust done the way only the Japanese can. I don't really know what else to say—it's so hard to explain perfection. And while I picked this EP for my list, everything Kriegshög put out this year (split EP with Dog Soldier and a split 7" with Deathtribe [see next year's list]) was phenomenal, I listened to *Hardcore Hell* the most. I am stoked for way more material from this killer band.

UNKIND – "First Propaganda, Crustie Not Hippies" EP (Crew For Life)

REDNECKS – "Lose a Border" EP (S.T.C.)

I spent the majority of this year listening to mostly noisy Japanese hardcore (as the first two-and-a-half spots on this list may indicate), and I really couldn't decide between these two, nor did I want to knock anything else off the list, so, since they are similar in style, *they can share a spot!* These EPs are the debut records from both bands, though *Crustie Not Hippies* was recorded in '03 and appears to have been Unkind's demo. This record takes the Discharge-via-Scandi-style and minces it through the Disorder grinder to a fine pulpy perfection—very similar to the first band on my list. Ahhhhh. The Rednecks EP relies more on actual hardcore riffage than atmosphere to set their tone, but the noise is still present. The bass is kind of buried in the mix but the record is so high-end that if you crank the bass on your stereo, the bass breaks are terrifying sounding. Both of these EPs, along with Kriegshög, personify perfect music to me, music that norms would laugh at or run from in fear…the sound of a bomb blast.

NEEDLES – "Twisted Vision" EP (Lengua Armada / Bad Skulls)

Not to try and play the "members of" game, but this record is equal to the sum of its parts, and when those parts are current and former members of Talk Is Poison, Look Back And Laugh, Crudos, Limp Wrist, Never Healed, and Midnight (the PDX one), how the fuck could this not be one of the best records of the year? The second time I saw Needles, I did a front flip off the stage onto nobody and landed on my neck, which was sore for months, and didn't regret it for one second. So yeah, it *should* go without saying that live, this band is fucking *incredible*! The pounding riffs would be enough to best any band out there, but when you throw in the crazy-ass drumming (just listen to the first change in "Filling Holes," the way the riff just trudges on and the drums go into that sick fucking high-hat part), it's mind-blowing.

SYPHILITIC VAGINAS – "Black Motor Covenant" EP (Rescued From Life)

So, all things considered, I'd think this "band" is kinda stupid—the name, the idea of putting out such über-limited releases (though, not this one, or the killer LP), *and* the whole one-man-band thing—if it wasn't so fucking flawlessly executed. A spot-on GISM/Bathory/Motley Crüe mesh tossed with a Motör-punk feel and the chops to pull it off (which makes the one-man-band thing incredibly impressive).

DOUBLE NEGATIVE – "Raw Energy" EP (Sorry State)

When a few vets that were playing this game in the '80s can pull off something this fresh and interesting in 2008, well, number one, the kids *really* need to step it up, and number two, how the fuck can you *not* pay attention? Their LP was on my list last year and this mutant EP trumps that shit. If this were a full LP's worth of material that sounded this fucked up…swoon. Seriously, though, Double Negative is the most interesting and original face on the American hardcore scene in 2008/2009 and the A-side of this EP…holy fuck. Both sides are, well, "raw energy," but the A-side is just a head scratcher.

SACRED SHOCK – "For a Living" EP (Schizophrenic)

I'd go as far as to say that this band is the apex of beef and melody in any hardcore band. The vocals and music are so fucking tough and so perfectly melodic, much in the way that the Norwegians did it in the '80s—bands like Kafka Prosess and So Much Hate who melded the hooks with the burl, only with more burl than mood. "Double Standards" is still my favorite song of the year. Love it to death.

HERDS – "Full Wolf Moon" EP (Fashionable Idiots) & "Spring / " 45 (Deerhealer)

This was also a tough call…while I think the *Full Wolf Moon* EP was a more concise output, the track "Spring," is incredible—truly inventive hardcore, and that fucking intro riff that shows up again later still gives me huge fucking chills. As for the *Full Wolf Moon* record, I think this whole thing is a ripping-good, groundbreaking hardcore record for 2008 and everyone should give it a listen.

REPERCUSSIONS – "No Peace" EP (Feral Ward)

Kind of a no-brainer here… One of the best non-throwback hardcore bands the US has spawned in years and it's a shame they were here and gone so fast.

DEAD SECTION – "World's Grey" EP (Pissed Misanthrope)

I consider Religious War one of the best bands of the last decade, so how could I not love this record? Mr. Insane can do no wrong: Religious War, Blood Runs Red, Rotten Cadaver, and now this… To me, Dead Section sounds more like Religious War that any of his other efforts. Those dropped-in solos are so over-the-top.

DAILY VOID – "(Surprise, Surprise) You've Lost Your Eyes / In the Year Zero" (HoZac)

The only non-hardcore EP on my list, this is the sound of a panic, the sound of anxiety, the sound of your limbs turning into flippers. Sitting here at the beginning of 2009 and reflecting on all the bands that were doing this sound last year, this is the only record that really matters. Daily Void has put out nothing but great records, no doubt, but the sound on this single just captured "that" moment, much like the Observers LP; that one very instant when a band that already had "something," nailed everything just perfectly. Mr. Reatard is washed up and all the imitators are just a bunch of flaccid dicks briefly rubbing past you on the bus. If you're looking for cold, snotty, creepy garage punk, look no further.

LPs:

INVASIÓN – "La Caza" 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)

I heard the bad news recently that this band broke up, but on the upside, it appears they will be back soon with a new name. The intro to this flawless record sets the perfect tone more than any other record I can think of—the slow repetition, the noise, the whispering…*fuck!* The eerie laugh that opens "Juventad Perdita," too. This record makes me wanna mosh through walls like the fucking Kool-Aid man. So cold. So depressive. So devastating.

RAJOITUS – "Maailman Hautajainen" LP (Putrid Filth Conspiracy)

This thing is fuckin' *nasty*. Fast, ugly Swedish hardcore with crazy ripping solos. *Aaaaarrgghhhh!*

DILLINGER FOUR – "Civil War" LP (Fat Wreck)

If this list were based on number of listens alone, this would be a shoe-in for the top slot. I think my review a few months back said all I need to say to describe this pop-punk masterpiece, but I'm really glad I can revisit it, because I do think I can now safely say, without a doubt, *Civil War* is my favorite Dillinger Four album. Since its release, I went back and listened to all the others and they don't appeal to me as much as they used to, considering I've listened to this one nearly one million times since October. It's more bubblegum-y due to the Erik-heavy nature of the tracks and the only thing that makes my workday move at a pace more than sap. There have been weeks where I listened to this album for eight straight hours almost every day, and every hook still sounds perfect every time it comes back around. That's a good enough reason as any to include it.

MEANWHILE – "Reality or Nothing" LP (Feral Ward)

It's fuckin' Meanwhile! The only band that can do Discharge (ahem) better than Discharge.

WALLS – LP (Painkiller)

This record makes me feel like shit.

STRAIGHTJACKET NATION – "Cheap Kicks" LP (Shortfuse)

Featuring a cover so good they used it again on the single! Ripping record. Killer live band. A+ house-guests. Oz hardcore is destroying right now.

COLD WORLD – "Dedicated to Babies Who Came Feet First" CD (Deathwish)

Who woulda thunk that a hip-hop/thuggy hardcore hybrid band with occasional grunge vocal parts, DJ breaks, and sampled chorus parts could be so fucking good? Well, it is—deal with it. This is seriously the most insane, over the top ludicrous amalgamation of sounds. Fuck it. My second most listened to album of 2008. How can you go wrong with that album title and with a song that goes from a faster NYHC-style part before dropping the dub air-horn and ending in a dub with Warrior Queen singing over it? Think Biohazard but better. Whatever, next year you'll be thinking, "How did I not get into this band sooner?"

EXTORTION – "Sick" LP (Deep Six)

More Oz hardcore. Extortion's go-for-the-throat blasting caught my ear with their first LP, *Degenerate*, but on this one they really perfected the madness. The simplicity really brings to light how mean the tunes sound. I prefer to spin this one B-side first. Call it powerviolence, call it fastcore, call it whatever, but this shit shreds and I can't help but compare *Sick* to NO COMMENT.

BASTARD SONS OF APOCALYPSE – "Strangled by the System" LP (Todo Destruido)

The best US D-beat band going, taking the Totalitär style of more notes per riff and running with it, the Texas way. Love it. Not too shabby live, either.

LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Near Dark" LP (Wicked Witch)

Two songs define this record for me and catapult it past Lebenden Toten's earlier output: "Eat the Life" and "Near Dark." The mid-paced nature of these tracks really draws out all the elements of Lebenden Toten's sound. The bass line in "Near Dark" is chilling. The best record from a band that can do no wrong.

Live:

WALLS at Balazo—completely untouchable

PAUL LUCICH

1. BLANK DOGS – "Mirror Lights" EP (Drone Errant)
I think this is as near to the perfect album length as you can get (around ten minutes). There are two layered spoken word/weird sound interjections that do a good job of pacing the cruciality of the tape. The bass riff and hook in "Freezing Styles" takes shit to semi-iconic status, and the weird minimal leads in that song compliment the bass riff and offer possibilities for crucial and fundamental changes in human comportment.

2. THE NEW BLOODS – "The Secret Life" LP (Kill Rock Stars)
Bought this on tape 'cause I think the LP was sold out when *i* got around to tracking it down. I only have a tape deck in the kitchen and this got a lot of spins during lunch. Reminds me of the Minutemen in the same way that Tiny Hawks records from a few years back did. It sounds like an innovative take on an old formula (a formula that wasn't too prescriptive or rigid)... plus the bass lines are dynamic as shit. Killer.

3. NOBUNNY – "Love Visions" LP (1-2-3-4-Go!)
Not every song on here is great, but most every song is good, and since the not-necessarily-great songs are keeping the company with the likes of "Chuck Berry Holiday" and the undeniably classic "I Am a Girlfriend," they all work well together. Gratuitous eroticism cushioned by Ramones style über-catchiness. I'd hit it.

4. SO COW – "Commuting" EP (Going Underground)
Kinda mellow, kinda penetratingly epic. The band/dude penned some great, smart lyrics that don't sound forced or choke out the melody. "Commuting" is a classic about aging and ex-pseudo-lovers. Listening to this and feeling old and nostalgic is a party. Something like the Undertones mixed with the Onion Flavored Rings.

5. XYX – "Sistema De Terminacion Sexual" EP (S-S)
This new/no wave lo-fi blown-out EP had one of my favorite songs of the year on it ("Anel and Her Problem"). It is as catchy and anthemic as Andrew WK but better and more damaged and unconventional. It sounds like riot grrrl on (good) psychedelics.

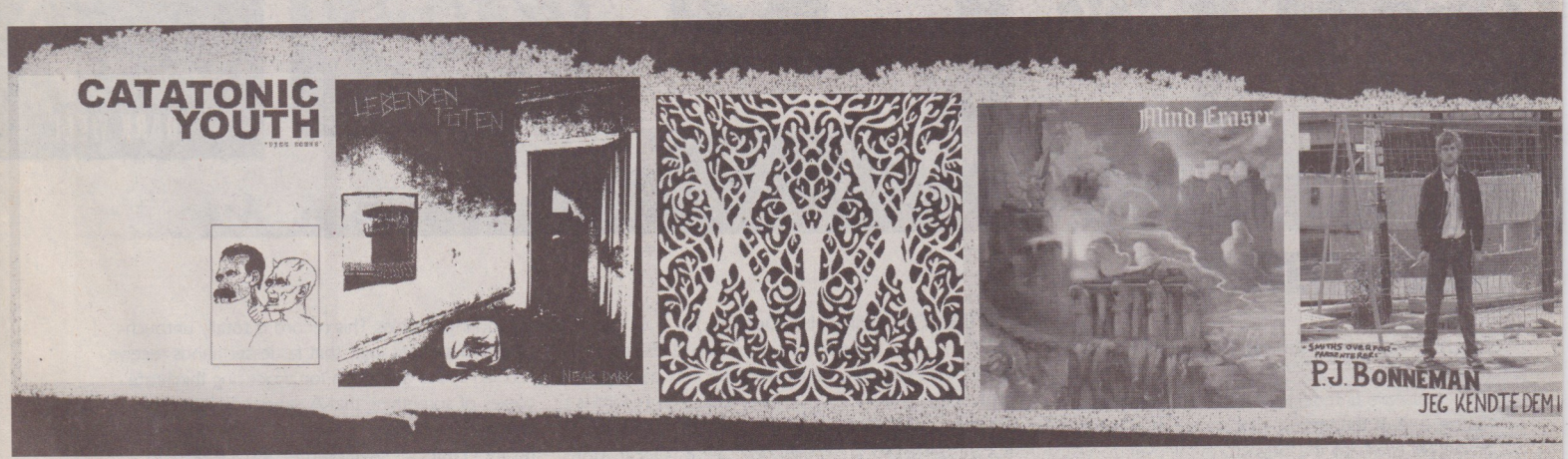
6. MARKED MEN – "Fortune" EP (Dirtnap)
The A-side reminded me of some killer song I had never heard off of one of the Marked Men's first couple LPs that's a little Potential Johns-ish; the B-side has drums that sounded a little like the Dils' "You're Not Blank."

7. ZOLA JESUS – "Poor Sons" EP (Die Stasi)
This is on here 'cause of that song "Poor Boys." I like it. It sounds like some warped, Nyquil-drenched rerecording of the soundtrack to an eerie part of some old movie. It's just a piano and vocals. My first thought when I heard it was that it sounded a little like Grouper doing a lo-fi, distorted, sorta creepy, sorta classical Blank Dogs thing.

8. HOMOSEXUALS – "Love Guns" LP (Serious Business Music)
What's the water cooler jam gossip… Does this chortle out cosmic thunder? Does it wallow in shit? Does this sound like the Who? Is the dude behind the band an asshole opportunist with questionable affiliations? All sorts of questions have been raging around this one. And it's not necessarily talk that's sprung up on its own. I keep asking people about it and playing it for them because I can't find anyone else who has listened to it. The hook from the first song on here ("Love Guns") ended up stuck in my head for days. The rest of this took a little getting used to. It's structured like a lot of the other material affiliated with the Homosexuals camp in that there are one or two punk/DIY/power-pop sounding songs then a bunch of weird shit. Aside from a few minutes of noise, it's all catchy.

9. DEAD MECHANICAL – "A Great Lie" EP (Sex Cells)
Got this one to review. Dug it. It has a classic pop punk sound kind of like the Ringers or even Statues do, but it's also a little moodier and tosses in a little bit of Superchunk. It's HPV-style infectious; there's a 70% chance you'll be in its throes at some point in your life.

10. DILLINGER FOUR – "Civil War" LP (Fat Wreck)
I like gruff-vocaled melodic punk. Like that second American Steel record. I've always really enjoyed some of the songs the dude with the gruffer voice sings ("Doublewhiskeycokenoice," "Superpowers Enable Me to Blend in with Machinery"). I like first half of this one a lot. "Minimum Wage Is a Gateway Drug" is good enough to edge out the competition and leave this with the coveted final spot in my prestigious year-end top ten; bedazzled and celebrated.



STUART SCHRADER

New:

GAUZE – "Binbou Yusuri No Rizumu Ni Notte" LP (Prank)
No-brainer. You may not have a brain after listening, actually. Also, even if this weren't *the new Gauze LP* it would be brain-detonating.

HORRÖR – "Descontroladas" LP (Trabuc)
Meanwhile and Avskum both released killer LPs this year, but Horrör viciously tear the modern D-beat raw punk genre to pieces. Step aside, Sweden.

INVASIÓN – "La Caza" LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
The sound of an enormous door slamming in the depths of hairgel.

LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Near Dark" LP (Wicked Witch)
Haven't heard this yet, but it'll probably be good.

NO FUCKER – "Conquer the Innocent" EP (No Real Music) & "Live 2/22/08" tape (AA)
The 7" is the best vinyl yet from these perennial misanthropes but the cassette begins to approximate how rabid and ear-shattering their live show is.

SEX/VID – "Communal Living" 12" & "Nests" EP (Dom America)
Best US band, best riffs in hardcore nowadays, best friends, worst hangover.

SILLA ELÉCTRICA – "Cloaca" EP (Solo Para Punks)
Punk for punx. If you don't like this, hang up your boots.

STRUGGLE FOR PRIDE – "Change the Mood / Movie Scenes" (Answer)
"Extreme" doesn't even begin to describe this. More than words.

TITMACHINE – "I Wanna Be Your Dog / Schneller" (Meeuw Muzak)
So shit. I love it.

V/A – "Esta Sucia Ciudad" tape (Cintes Podrides)
Proof that Barcelona has the best raw hardcore bands in the world right now. This is the best hardcore tape compilation since the '80s.

Old:

DELERIUM TREMENS "Presagio de Muerte" EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Rapid-fire shit-fi basement Basque '80s hardcore. *Perfecto.*

Special France Section:

RUTH – "Mon Pote/Mescalito" (Poutre Apparente), SOGGY – LP (Mémoire Neuve), LES VANDALES – "Loup-Garou" EP (self-released)

Sexy/thuggy synth punk—must be heard to be believed; unsexy/thuggy neanderthal falsetto stooge punk—must be heard to be believed; rippin' proof that conventional wisdom about French hardcore should be rethought.

J.T. IV – "Cosmic Lightning" LP+DVD (Drag City)
Outsider fuck-up fuzz dipso-/megalo-mania. Creepy and essential.

LEUZEMIA – LP (Lengua Armada)
The Peruvian punk LP. Had Leuzemia been from Belgium '77, this LP would already be your favorite accompaniment for a long night with pogo, swill, and gluebag.

THE NIXE – LP (Polly Maggoo)
Mandatory LP collection of a standout of the Dutch pre-hardcore punk scene. In their understated way, Nixe captured a certain punk ethos better than nearly any of their contemporaries. See my interview last issue.

SOLVENT ABUSE – "Last Salute" LP (Demo Tapes)
Despite dozens of plodding, enervating Leather, Bristles, Studs, and Acne records filling the bins in Britain circa '82, Solvent Abuse never managed to release a record of their own. In hindsight, the best tracks on this pissed-off ripper blow away at least three-quarters the No Future and Riot City catalogs.

SYSTEMATIC DEATH – "Systemania vol. I + 2" 2xLP (Partners in Crime)
Incredible legit vinyl issue of Systematic Death's entire output. The first volume, which includes cassette-only and unreleased tracks, is particularly eye-opening. At their best, they shamed nearly all of their contemporaries with brute speed, including Gauze (gasp!).

TAKUU / ALAMAAILMA – split 10" (Mainline Rider)
The sound of an extremely primitive nuclear device fashioned out of Finnish homebrew canisters exploding in a teenager's bedroom circa '82. Perhaps bands don't sound like Alamaailma anymore because no one wears *the glasses* nowadays.

ULTIMO RESORTE – "La Larga Sombra Del Punk" LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Perfect reissue of a band that should be written on the leather jackets of every punk.

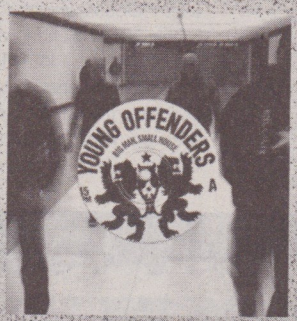
VIOLENT UPRISING – "4-Track EP" 12" (Demo Tapes)
The UK's answer to *Victims of a Bombraid*, before *Victims of a Bombraid*. It feels like I've waited my whole life for this record, and it was worth it. The best vinyl issue of cassette-only tracks since the Plasmid EP.

Honorable mentions:

SPK – "Dokument IIIO" 6xLP + t-shirt + 3x7" (Vinyl-on-Demand)
It is a travesty that only a limited number of these extremely expensive box-sets include the first three SPK singles, which are three of the fiercest records of all time. Other than the first LP in the box, this release falls outside *MRR*'s purview, so without the 7"s, it doesn't quite make the cut. But it's an impressive package anyway, with a great booklet. Someone should reissue the three 7"s as a set post-haste.

SUBVERSION – "Child Abuse" EP (Game of the Arseholes)
My release. Belgium '83 Discharge rip. Brittle but ruthless critique of all that exists.

PARABELLUM – "Sacrilegio/Mutacion Por Radiacion" LP (bootleg)
Most people consider them a metal band, but Parabellum straddled the divide between punk and metal in Medellín (supposedly the violent division between the two scenes began at a gig of theirs, viewable on YouTube). Anyway, their first record is the most insane-sounding record of all time. Period.



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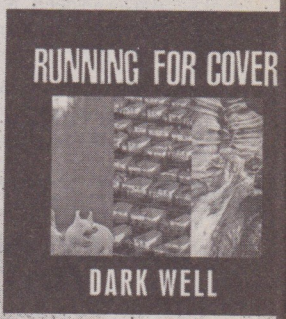


ROBERT COLLINS

Records…

GAUZE – "Binbou Yusuri No Rizumu Ni Notte" LP (Prank)
They really are untouchable. Nothing compares to Gauze, one of the longest-running bands in hardcore anywhere (perhaps *the* longest?). After over 25 years, they graced us with their fifth LP, and it is as near perfect as any of their previous releases. Cheers to Ken for getting this one to vinyl.

QUESTION – "Insanity" EP (Fashionable Idiots)
Only their second EP, *Insanity* is precisely what hardcore should be—absolutely unrelenting, with lyrics that are simultaneously visceral and inspirational, and punk as fucking anything. Classic US hardcore melted into furious'80s Scandinavian thrash, but played way faster and way better. I listen to this and I just shake my head and wonder if it gets any better.

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING – "I'm Guilty / Demon's Demands" (Iron Lung)
Two nasty dirges that fall somewhere between the Stooges and Ivy Green. The LP is really, really good, but these two riffs that make up these two songs (and take up just over eleven minutes in the process) create such a vibe so effortlessly. This is perhaps the "coolest" record that I own.

EXTORTION – "Sick" LP (Deep Six)
From the most isolated city in the world (Perth, Australia), Extortion are possibly the best band currently playing powerfully violent music. This record is a fucking bulldozer.

ICON GALLERY – "Retribution" EP & "Declination / No More" (Dead Skull)
The combination of a thick wall of melodic guitar and beautifully piercing female vocals is what separates this band from the masses. The progression of Icon Gallery from the 2007 demo (which was released as the *Retribution* EP after the single came out) to the two-song single is perfect; the songs are a little more structured, Chani's voice fits the music even better, and the groundwork is set for wheat could well be my favorite LP of 2009. I love these two records.

AVSKUM – "Uppror Underifrån" LP (Prank)
This is the answer to 2007's Totalitär album. Genre-defining Swedish hardcore from dudes who helped define the genre in the first place. Four songs into the record, on "Patriarkhatet," they switch D-beats (from Discharge to Disorder), and the result is one of my favorite moments on vinyl ever. It's nearly impossible for me to hear that song without losing my fucking marbles. This record is totally untouchable, and it defies logic that far lesser bands receive accolades and adoration for producing third-rate copies of something that Avskum continues to improve upon. Sigh.

IRON LUNG – "Sexless//No Sex" LP (Prank)
The most original and inventive hardcore band in (at least) a decade. The most devastating record released in 2008.

BRING DOWN THE HAMMER – CD (self-released)
One dude in this band has been making hardcore in the asscrack of America for over 20 years—something which commands congratulations, if not respect. A jackhammer assault that only lets up for one folk tune (that I choose to ignore, sorry Chad). Pro-worker, anti-religion, and fucking fast….what's not to love?

PISSCHRIST – "Victims of Faith" LP (Yellow Dog)
Perfect modern D-beat hardcore. I understand that one might not need every black-and-white-sleeved raw punk record released. But you need this one.

YOUNG OFFENDERS – "Small Man, Big House / Saints" (Deranged)
A flawless two-song single. "Small Man, Big House"

has been my main jam since I moved back to the Bay; it's the best way I know to start your day. Upbeat, tuneful, and strangely subdued while still being powerful. In the classic 45 rpm style, the flipside is not quite as fast, not quite as memorable, but it grows on you nicely. '90s DC hardcore meets power-pop meets UK punk…and *still* no lyrics in their records.

IRON LUNG / HATRED SURGE – "Broken" EP (Iron Lung)
This is not a split. Iron Lung and the sole permanent member of Hatred Surge wrote and recorded all of these songs together, and the result is the combination of the best parts of both bands. Atonal dirges nod to Iron Lung, while Hatred Surge provides a monstrous bass that gives songs like "Awakening" and "Hunted" tremendous low-end power. "Eraser" is my favorite song of 2008, and the fact that this project exists outside of the two bands makes it just a little bit more special.

Live….

COMPLETE NGEHE (Medan, Sumatra, Indonesia)
Simply put, Complete Ngehe are the punkest thing I have ever seen.

DUCK & COVER (Bay Area, California)
Sometimes getting to the show on time pays off. I don't even remember who I went to see, because the first band that played on the floor at Gilman that night completely blew me away.

CRUX (Sydney, Australia)
They surrounded all of us aurally; well-crafted songs that were always heavy and moody whether fast or slow, quiet or deafeningly loud, and Anna's vocals will give you goosebumps.

NICE VIEW (Nagoya, Japan)
Last time I saw them was in 2001 in Nagoya, and the drummer bum-rushed the stage while we were playing and delivered a five-minute bongo solo. This time I drove to Michigan, and they have only gotten better. The only live band I've seen that rivals the intensity of Gauze, except that Nice View laugh sometimes on stage (which could be seen as a negative, I suppose). 12-hours round-trip for 25 minutes of music, and a 38-year-old mom puked Sparks in the backseat while Nice View while was playing.

USELESS CHILDREN (Melbourne, Australia)
The music is pretty standard punk, but there is something about Useless Children's delivery that makes them special. Their drummer quit a while back, so the singer took it upon herself to learn to play drums, and the result is now a little bit awkward, which equals awesome.

GRAVEDANCERS (Jakarta, Indonesia)
Party thrash, with fake blood and everything! But Gravedancers were so much more that night, and I have not had so much fun watching a band in ages.

LEBENDEN TOTEN (Portland, Oregon)
Painfully noisy, in the good way. If any one element of the band was not delivered perfectly, there is a good chance that Lebenden Toten might be utterly forgettable, but that is not the case. Also, Thrillhouse might be the perfect place to have seen them, since a Midwest basement is likely out of the question.

CUT SICK (Melbourne, Australia)
The very embodiment of a "wall of guitars" and unrelenting hardcore. Nearly every song clocked in well under a minute, and every night their ten-minute sets were an assault of guitars and hair—totally brilliant.

QUESTION (Minneapolis, Minnesota)
Short, fast, smart, angry, determined, and they can play their asses off.

KAKTUS KARUKA (Lucena, Philippines)
Seeing a band this tight and with this much power is always great. But to see people rocking this hard and having so much fun at the same time? It is also worth mentioning that this was their first show….

STRAIGHT ANSWER (Jakarta, Indonesia)
Super energetic and positive SxE, they were the first of 15 bands that night, and still memorable when the show was over—no small feat.

THE ESTRANGED (Portland, Oregon)
They put out a whole slew of records this year that are all great, but the one time I saw them, with perhaps 20 people in attendance on a Monday night, was positively stellar.

SMOKE TOWN (Guangzho, China)
Chaotic and marginally inept raw punk that took us all completely by surprise. One of the best frontmen I have ever seen, if only because he seemed so awkward and uncomfortable.

MITCH CARDWELL

ALBUMS

1. HANK IV – "Refuge in Genre" LP (Siltbreeze)
In keeping with my tendency to make bold claims, I consider Hank IV to be the best punk act going today, thanks in no small part to this LP. While their previous releases are fantastic, this is the first to capture the power this band has live.

2. OOGA BOOGAS – "Romance and Adventure" LP (Aarght!)
Strongest of the many impressive Aussie showings in 2008, managing to even top the new LP by brother-band Eddy Current Suppression Ring. Varied moods and sounds, all rocking to high hell.

3. THE HOSPITALS – "Hairdryer Peace" LP (self-released)
Was just talking to Dr. Icki about this one. Against the backdrop of MySpace bedroom noise-makers and weird-for-weird's-sake horseshit, a band like The Hospitals really stands out. This isn't just some noisy fuck-around…it's a painstakingly assembled document of a great fucking band, front to back. And yes, it's an ear-splitter.

4. NOTHING PEOPLE – "Anonymous" LP (S-S)
It's probably impossible for this band to take a false step. Nothing People draw from such a wide array of influences, from the decidedly out-there current wave to the traditional proto and glam ancients…but the brew comes out totally fresh.

5. HUMAN EYE – "Fragments of the Universe Nurse" LP (Hook or Crook)
There's a whole lotta focus on the weirdness of this outfit, but no one ever seems to mention just how grounded in ROCK Mr. Vulger's work is. This is envelope-pushing stuff, sure…but it's still true Rock 'n' Roll.

6. CHEVEU – LP (S-S)
Wait…you mean to tell me this is an art-punk dance record??? From motherfucking France??? With great guitars??? And it's even thought provoking and stays with you after the turntable arm retracts??? Get the fuck out of here! I spun this endlessly this year and ultimately concluded that Cheveu is one of the most awkward and itchy bands around right now.

7. NOBUNNY – "Love Visions" LP (Bubbledumb)
A triumph of goofy fake-punk! This list has been kinda heavy-duty thus far, but this is easily the most fun slab released in '08. Infectious, hilarious…and creepy.

8. EAT SKULL – "Sick to Death" LP (Siltbreeze)
First off, best sleeve of the year. If you can somehow incorporate Mr. Spock, a bong, and The Blue Man Group into the cover art of your LP, you'll earn a spot in my Top Ten automatically. The added bonus here is that it's a really good fucking record, head and shoulders above the bands they're often lumped in with (I'll spare you).

9. BRAINBOMBS – "Fucking Mess" LP (Lystring)
"She took a pee / Behind a tree / Looking like a monkey" vs. "Dirty Stinking Cocks." Translation: something for everyone.

10. APACHE – "Boomtown Gems" LP (Birdman)
The harsh review their single got in these pages almost assuredly made this LP fly under your radar. If you're into sleaze, this delivers. Makes The Time Flys look like Minor Threat.

SINGLES

1. MAYYORS – "Megan's LOLZ" EP (Gomerdome)
Power.

2. WOUNDED LION – "Carol Cloud / Pony People" (S-S)
Great off-pop from Los Angeles. Unlike anyone else going right now.

3. BUZZER – "Disco Kiddz" EP (Douchemaster)
A proto-punk fueled anthem in 2008??? And how. Main Buzz Andy Jordan has never made a false move in any of his bands…and Buzzer may top them all.

4. BOX ELDERS – "Hole in My Head" EP (Grotto)
Best live band I saw all year. Expect BIG things.

5. THE ELECTRIC BUNNIES – "Chewing Gum" EP (Florida's Dying)
Their first single made a great impression…this one hits you with a resounding thud. Totally great pop with a varied attack: sweetness, semi-psych, but yeah…punk.

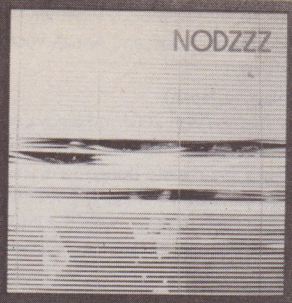
6. P.J. BONNEMAN – "Jeg Kendte Dem Ikke" EP (Spild Af Vinyl)
Most impressive showing from the much-loved Danish school of punks this year, easily trumping Cola Freaks and rest. Never saw many folks talking about this one, but it's a total fucking winner. MORE PLEASE!!!

7. ERIC AND THE HAPPY THOUGHTS – "Never Gonna Do It" EP (Bubbledumb)
If you told me there were lost tunes from the Dale Lawrence-era Gizmos, I'd believe you and then stop at nothing to score them. Perfect good-time rock 'n' roll.

8. SANDWICH – "Assisted Living / I've Had a Few" (Columbus Discount)
The return of Ron House. Much needed.

9. THE INTELLIGENCE – "Debt & ESP / Chateau Bandit" (Plastic Idol)
I can never seem to get enough of these. The B-side, "Chateau Bandit," might just be my most spun tune of the year. Great singles band!!!

10. CHOCOLAT – "Gabrielle" EP (Radio 81)
This is my sleeper pick of the whole year. This great French-Canadian garage EP came and went, perhaps lost in a wash of vinyl over-saturation. A shame, cuz it's fucking great, blending the best aspects of French pop with perfectly executed garage punk. Please seek this one out!!!



MARISSA MAGIC

MODERN CREATURES – "Thick Thick Black" EP (Grotesque Modern)
So I got this for review right at the beginning of the year and the thing didn't leave my turntable for like a gazillion years. I think they hate it when they get this comparison, but it is totally Siouxsie Sioux-esque. It's soaring but totally desperate-sounding at the same time; the perfect soundtrack/description to isolated, broke city life.

NEW BLOODS – "The Secret Life" LP (Kill Rock Stars)
All I gotta say is it sounds like the future of storytelling.

NU SENSAE – LP (Isolated Now Waves)
Young and scrawny two-piece grunge powerhouse. All the rage of Babes in Toyland and all the overdriven heaviness of Godheadsilo. Somehow that last sentence is so embarrassing but so right. *Aaaaaammmmaaaaazzziingg.*

GRASS WIDOW – Demo tape (Brown Interior Music)
It's not often that I stumble upon a band that I didn't even know existed and completely fall in love with instantly. Somehow it's pop music harmonies that express the exhaustion and anxiety of waking up everyday.

MUTATORS – "Secret Life" LP (Nominal)
Ahhhh, Mutators on my year-end list again. I kind of like the *Paper Words* 7" more than this, but that's probably just because I have a short attention span. Again, #1 girl screamer ever. I don't understand how they make such an all-encompassing wall of terrifying fuzz with just three people.

U.S. GIRLS – "Introducing..." LP (Siltbreeze)
It's like Neil Young but a girl fuzzed-out alone in her room with weird percussion; the saddest sounding music ever.

XYX – "Sistema de Terminacion Sexual" EP (S-S)
This psychedelic punk-out kills. Girl screams, chaos, delayed weirdness, taking that whole early Sonic Youth sound to a whole new place.

VIVIAN GIRLS – "Wild Eyes" EP (Plays With Dolls)
Foggy, reverbed-out, shoegazey garage pop played and sung by three ladies. So dreamy!

VAPID – "Do the Earthquake" EP (Nominal)
As always I'm a sucker for fast, loud girl scream freak-outs. I love it and they also have a couple amazing cuts on the *Emergency Room* comp.

ABE VIGODA – "Skeleton" LP (PPM)
I've been paying attention to these kids since the first time I saw them and they had like five drummers (it was weird), but now they're doing this whole "tropical punk" thing and it's really good.

DAN GOETZ

Ten records that made my year:

1. INSOMNIO – "Happy Loneliness" LP (Trabuc / The Pression / Audiogorilla)
I have been waiting years for a record like this to come along. Musically, this is melodic punk that's somewhere between Agent Orange and a less UK-influenced Peligro Social. One of the things I look for most in bands is riffs and melodies that I haven't heard before, and this is where Insomnio succeeds and so many melodic hardcore/punk bands that otherwise have the right ingredients fall short. The LP is a powerful, moving record that I would even say has an existential bend, the kind of thing you'd listen to while telling yourself you're not crazy and/or scheming escape plans.

2. TOTAL ABUSE – LP (Deranged)
I literally cannot sit still when listening to this LP. The songs on here are varied to the point that this almost listens like a comp, but the explosive hatred (of self and otherwise) manifested in the vocals is the common bond. You have pounding fast hardcore of almost grind proportions, brooding slow moments reminiscent of "Damaged I" (but sounding independently conceived), the noise hardcore that begins this record, and pretty much everything in between.

3. SEX/VID – "Communal Living" LP (Dom America)
Best thing they've done since the first 7". The seething yet more subdued sound of the second two 7"s gets its hinges blown off and fully comes into its own here, with the deceptively simple songs of those records giving way to more complex songwriting that fully incorporates the addition of a second guitarist and rides on every ounce of its potential power. The minute of feedback that ends this record is fucking unreal.

4. CATBURGLARS – "You May Be Dumb But I Don't Care" EP (Cowabunga)
This might've been late 2007, but I listened to it more than any 7" on this list this year (and still less than their ever better *Holy Shit* 7"). Snotty garage-influenced hardcore that serves as a quality soundtrack for the moment you realize your formative years have been reduced to settling for stupid parties filled with social tools and need to figure out a backup plan.

5. WALLS – LP (Painkiller)
Picking up where Cold Sweat left off and heading into uncharted waters, and the single best live band I saw in 2008.

6. MAYYORS – "Megan's LOLZ" EP (Gomerdome)
Awful title, deceiving cover art (featuring unicorns), great record. Describing this as "the essence of the Ramones and early Black Flag residing in the amps of Karp" might make me sound like an uninformed tool, but then again, was I really intended as one of the worthy few to hear this record?

7. GOMEK – "What the Hell Happened?" EP (Drugged Conscience / Dead Tank)
The ashes of His Hero Is Gone left in the lethargic Florida sun, picked up by four maladjusted, doomed Orlando dwellers with nothing to do but wait for the world to end.

8. DOUBLE NEGATIVE – "Raw Energy" EP (Sorry State)
Their LP was my single favorite record of 2007, and this one is at the opposite end of this year's list, but still not too shabby. While the LP sounds like it was conceived of apart from current hardcore, this 7" is interesting in that it makes me think that playing with bands like Government Warning and other regionals has rubbed off on their sound.

9. FUTURE PHONES – "Tourist" EP (self-released)
Youthful defiance and determination in the shadow of inevitable catastrophe. Seeing this band play a night-time generator show against the eerily perfect backdrop of the esoterically beautiful but unswimmable industrial beach off 16th Street sums up their feeling.

10. BLACK TIME – "ICU" EP (Skulltones)
Something melancholy yet catchy to hold your attention while you stare at the grey sky and think about your life.

Top five demos:
LOTUS FUCKER
TURBOSLUT
NOMOS
BOLD SLUG
THE GUILT

Top five live sets:
WALLS at Balazo, SF
MAYYORS at the Knockout, SF
STRAIGHTJACKET NATION at Balazo and in the Cesspool kitchen, SF/Oakland
REPOS at their final two shows in Chicago and Madison
FAILURES at the above two shows

RAMSEY KANAAN

Here's me top ten for the year, in no particular order:

DILLINGER FOUR – "Civil War" CD (Fat Wreck)
This is a great disc! It's been several years since I'd heard anything from D4 but this one was definitely worth the wait. Super tight high-energy musicianship with *big, big* hooks in every fucking song. Well-written lyrics preseânted with fantastic alternating vocals each of which come across as sincere and heartfelt. Think Jawbreaker and Pegboy and Alkaline Trio and that still doesn't do 'em justice. Every song on *Civil War* is solid and catchy. If I had to come up with a criticism for this CD I'd say there are a few too many wacky segues between songs (but really that's nit-picking with a disc this good). So, pick this one up and say hello to your new favorite. And while you're at it, call the CDC and have then quarantine the Fat Wreck Chords headquarters 'cuz this one should spread like the plague!

THE CLASS WAR KIDS – "A Strong People Need No Leader" CD (Rebel Time)
Wow! Reviewing this for *MRR* was my first time hearing this quartet out of Newfoundland and I must say I was rather impressed. The Class War Kids mix insightful political lyrics with super catchy punk tunes. Think Anti-Flag meets the Apers meets early Propagandhi with a touch of melodic street punk thrown in a la the Briggs. The band is very tight musically—crunchy guitars and rough, emotive vocals. There really aren't any crap songs on this ten-song disc but "No Shelter," "Song for the Broken Hearted," and the inspiring and especially heartfelt "Strike Back" were my faves. This is a very strong CD full of uplifting anthems that during these fucked-up times will help you to keep your head high as well as your fists. Nice work, Kids!

DOA – "Northern Avenger" CD (Sudden Death)
A few weeks ago I was listening to DOA's first album, *Something Better Change*, and was thinking how great it still sounds after all these years. Then I get this new disc to review that celebrates Keithley and Co.'s 30th anniversary as a band! I've gotta say that this is one of the best DOA albums to come out in many years. Great sound due to a solid production by Rob Rock and Jamey Koch —fat guitars, big shout choruses with classic DOA hooks. "Golden State," "Police Brutality," "How Long Till the Day," "Still a Punk"—hell, there are tons of great songs on here (even a punked-up cover of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Who Will Stop the Rain?"). I'm very happy to report that these highly influential Canucks have done themselves proud with *Northern Avenger*. Congratulations Joey. Here's hoping we get another 30 years out of you geezers!

THE REAL MCKENZIES – "Off the Leash" CD (Fat Wreck)
Being a long-time fan of the Real McKenzies I was excited when given this disc to review. Upon dropping it into my CD player I found the opening track to be good but not *great* in true Real McKenzies fashion. Then into tracks two and three I found myself thinking aloud, "Lads, o' lads, where are ye hooks?" Though it is a slow-starter, after the first few tracks *Off the Leash* proves itself to be worthy of the Real McKenzies name. As if in reply to my above question, "Kings of Fife" comes blaring out of my speakers shouting "Here. Here's our fuckin' hooks! Big ones like always. Hooks bigger than Robbie Burns sideburns ya c#nt!" Though this disc is spottier than their last couple of releases, after this point there are indeed some great songs, including "White Knuckle Ride," "My Mangy Hound," and possibly one of their best ever, "Drink Some More." I swear this song alone could make all of the hardline straight-edgers from the 1990s hoist a pint. (Oh yeah. They're all drinking already!) Unlike the other punk band with bagpipes, the Dropkick Murphys, who seem to have become a Fun-For-The-Whole-Family-Entertainment-At-The-Celtic-Heritage-Fair type band, the Real McKenzies maintain a bawdy punk irreverence towards both themselves and others. You should definitely see this band live when they come to your town but this disc will suffice in the meantime.

GUITAR GANGSTERS – "Razor Cuts: The Best of The Guitar Gangsters" CD (Captain Oi!)
This London trio has been kicking around for almost 20 years now but I didn't discover them until 2001 (already living in the Land of the Free) when TKO included "Safety Pin Through My Heart" on the *Punch Drunk III* comp. I *loved* that song and began seeking out other Guitar Gangsters releases. This "Best of" CD compiles some great songs from throughout the band's history and includes a couple of previously unreleased tracks, too. If you are unfamiliar with Guitar Gangsters, the closest comparison I can think of would be the Steve Jones/Paul Cook post-Pistols project The Professionals (the start of "Radio Shakedown" even sounds a bit like the Jones/Cook tune "Silly Thing" from *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*) blended with a little Ramones and a little Descendents and Bad Religion. The band has big guitars that play big catchy hooks. As with any "Best of" there are a couple of dubious track selections and a few glaring absences (such as their stellar "Field of Dreams"). Nonetheless, this disc is a great place to start if you are still unaware of these three quality geezers.

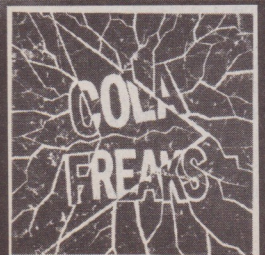
THE GROUCHO MARXISTS – "Manifesto!" CD (Wrapped in Plastic)
This four-piece out of New Jersey has a sound that melds poppy punk (Descendents meets the Briefs) and power pop (20/20, Shoes) with just enough post-punk noise (a la Gaunt) sprinkled about to keep things from going pure pop. This is a CD that I liked on the first listen but that *I really liked* on the second and third go round. The simple and beautiful glory of "I Just Wanna Hold You" and "Hey Janeane" shows why this band will remain in your head after the CD has stopped playing. For the final and unlisted track, the Groucho Marxists do a smashing rendition of Marshall Crenshaw's power-pop classic "Cynical Girl."

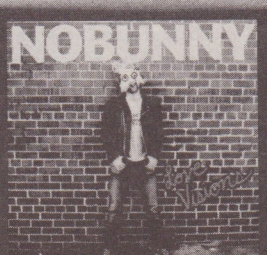
THE CUTE LEPERS – "Can't Stand Modern Music" CD (Blackheart)
Fucking great album title and a great album to go with that title! Started as a side project by Steve E. Nix from the Briefs, the Cute Lepers scored big by getting this released on the top-notch Blackheart Records label run by Joan Jett and Kenny Laguna. The disc sounds great. The band definitely has that bouncy, poppy British style similar to the Rezillos, Buzzcocks, Boys (or for a more current point of reference think the Exploding Hearts, Briefs, FM Knives). Crisp, tight playing, strong vocals, and a snappy production help these catchy two-and-a-half-minute gems jump to life. Stylistically there are a few interesting things mixed in (some slower songs, slide guitar on one track, etc.) while still maintaining an overall coherent feel to the album. There is only one song that doesn't work for me on this disc, but the brilliance of "Cool City," "Modern Pests," and the rest make it a minor aberration that is quickly forgotten.

THE OPPRESSED – "Won't Say Sorry" CD (Insurgence)
This is a two-disc set that complies all the cover songs the Oppressed ever recorded. As you may or may not know, Roddy Moreno, singer for this anti-fascist Oi band from Cardiff, Wales was instrumental in bringing SHARP (SkinHeads Against Racial Prejudice) over to the UK—so thumbs-up for that alone. Anyhow, all the classic Oi influences are covered (Cockney Rejects, Sham 69, 4-Skins, Last Resort) and most are done pretty well. A few are a bit too straightforward and too similar to the original. But, the covers that really shine are the ones from non-Oi bands (though still bands that influenced a lot of skins) such as Slade and Symarip. In fact, besides the Eddie & The Hot Rods cover, I'd say my two favorite songs on here are their re-workings of the Jamaican classics "Skinhead Girl" and "Madness." If you wanna know who influenced the Oppressed musically, this double-disc will tell you most everything you need to know.

GORDON CARR – "The Angry Brigade" DVD (PM Video)
Gordon Carr was a journalist who worked for the BBC amongst others. In the '70s, he produced two documentaries on British anarchism and armed-struggle groups—on the "Angry Brigade" (who carried out various bombings, machine-gunnings, and suchlike, targeting politicians, police HQ, etc.), and on the "Persons Unknown," members of the Anarchist Black Cross who were accused, in 1979, of conspiring with persons unknown to do unknown things (that the government wouldn't like, if it ever figured out what they were). Carr was that rarity—an actual honest-to-goodness journalist who was good at his job. He knew what he was talking about, and actually talked to both the various anarchists, and the police that attempted to bring them to "justice." The reason, of course, that these two excellent documentaries are being included in my top ten (other than they really are excellent documentaries!), is that the "Persons Unknown" documentary not only has a soundtrack by Crass and the Poison Girls (who recorded a benefit single for the "Persons Unknown" conspirators in 1979), but has the *only known video footage of Crass performing live* as part of the film. So there.

[Note: Ramsey's tenth pick ran afoul of The System!]





PACO MUS

I had a hard time finding ten new records I listened to a lot in 2008. It seems like I am guilty of the insta-file purchases as much as anyone else and maybe I didn't appreciate some records as much as they deserved. There is something wrong about it since the way I used to listen to music has chance drastically in the last few years, and I keep thinking that maybe I am missing a new Ziggy Stardust, Forever Changes *or even* Never Mind the Bollocks. *Maybe they don't make records like they used to. Don't get me wrong, I am far from nostalgic and still find myself trying to buy every record by Blank Dogs, Lebenden Toten, Sex Vid, Syphilitic Vaginas or any of the small bunch of bands I really, really, REALLY like. At the same time, I keep buying records hoping they'll be amazing after reading some crazy review only to play them once and file them away. The quest for the good ones is worth it once you come across a Catatonic Youth or Tit Machine, I think.*

Anyway, I'll try to stick to the rules and list mostly punk records. I won't list reissues because that is a total different world. It has been an AMAZING year for reissues in every field and I don't think it would possible narrow my favourites to ten. Remember this is MY list and I have terrible taste.

LPs:

1. LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Near Dark" LP (Wicked Witch)

I'd been waiting for this record to happen for months. I am a sucker for treble-laden Disorder worship and Lebenden Toten definitely didn't disappoint me. Their new rhythm section holds the band just as well as before, if not better. You can nearly feel how much they are struggling to keep things together giving them that falling-apart feel. Great, fast, urgent tracks with an incredible slow-paced number to start the B-side, giving the full-length the perfect balance it needed. This is a great pop record with really suited artwork in my opinion.

2. SEX/VID – "Communal Living" 12" (Dom America)

It seems like many bands tend to go for an LP at the first opportunity this days. Sex/Vid didn't and the wait was well worth it. *Communal Living* takes Sex/Vid's trademark guitar tone—negative and deep—and adds a second guitar that is a total *My War*-era Greg Ginn homage. Soloing all over the place, making the record extremely chaotic and increasing the sense of madness. The record sounds powerful and scary. Nasty, even. The packaging is fantastic with a heavy paste-on sleeve and artwork that suits the music perfectly.

3. INVASIÓN – "La Caza" 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)

I know I shouldn't be allowed to list records I released but I will lie if I don't say this is the record I played the most this year. The record that made me happiest and the records that drove me craziest. They are the sonic equivalent of what I feel living in a shitty apartment with no space to move, being crunched by the shit system around me. Having no other escape from doing the shit I do. They have been described as claustrophobic hardcore and I won't change that. Look forward to Destino Final, basically Invasión under a different name after some line-up changes.

4. GAUZE – "Binbou Yusuri No Rizumu Ni Notte" LP (Prank)

I am one of those people that thinks playing punk rock is for people under 30. But when the most energetic band you've ever seen is over 50 and the most manic hardcore record you listen in the whole year is by the same band, then it makes you re-think about age and punk. For my money, Gauze is the ultimate hardcore band. A band capable of playing three sets of 30 minutes in a row, playing different songs at light-speed without stopping in between, and a band capable of releasing classic record after classic record. *Binbou Yusuri No Rizumu Ni Notte*, although released in CD in 2007, didn't see the light of day on vinyl until last year. They are faster and dirtier the older they get—this LP is the clearest example.

5. SYPHILITIC VAGINAS – LP (Rescued From Life)

2008 probably will be remembered as the year people decided to do really stupid small presses of records. Lathe cuts started showing up, 100 copy presses were the norm. It was the year when, unless you lived nailed to the computer, you missed many good records. Syphilitic Vaginas is a clear example. Legend says they are a one-man band based in Sweden playing Japanese metal punk highly inspired by GISM. Who cares, really—the only thing that matters is that coming out of nowhere they managed to record a bunch of flawless records. Their LP was originally limited to 100 copies and luckily for most reissued later on by Hardcore Holocaust.

6. AVSKUM – "Uppror Underifrån" LP (Prank)

Avskum are a legend. They have been playing D-beat hardcore since the early '80s and every new record is just as great if not better than the previous one. Live they still kick ass and are sincere and political to the point of exhaustion. *Uppror Underifrån* took me a while to get into, mainly because the artwork is so damn ugly that I couldn't face looking at it. I even have a friend that plainly refuses to buy it because it. My mistake and his loss because it is a ferocious punk attack just as memorable and huge-sounding as *Punkista* was before it. Perfectly produced and sequenced, it sticks to the "if it ain't broken don't fix it" formula with excellent results.

7. MIDNIGHT – "Farewell to Hell" 10" (Nuclear War Now)

Mean and crude party proto metal not unlike Venom or Bulldozer. Somehow spent an insane amount of hours on my record player and it wouldn't make no sense not listing it on my top ten just because they are not a "punk" band. Great-looking record including an extra picture-disc 7" with the first 200 copies.

8. PISSCHRIST – "Victims of Faith" LP (Yellow Dog)

Pisschrist's second LP is as raw and intense as it gets. These Australians have been leaving people with open mouths left and right for the last couple of years and there is a reason for that. Perfectly executed D-beat noisy hardcore that reminds me of Framtid way too much. I love Framtid by the way, so does anyone who likes all-out hardcore destruction. It is a pity how ugly this record is, making me not wanting to have it at home. Hopefully I'll make my own sleeve soon; otherwise I'll have to get rid of it.

9. THE WANKYS / EXIT HIPPIES – split LP (Detonate)

I have a soft spot for the Wankys. They love what they do and they have sense of humour. They are a racket, granted. But I really love a good racket, I must say. This Wankys recording has the best artwork I've seen this year. Musically this probably is their best to date, too. You know the score—noisy Disorder/Confuse/Swankys-influenced mess. Exit Hippies can be a bit hit or miss for some people; for me they are just great. Their mix of rave and mega-noisy hardcore creates an unpleasant racket that is hard to listen for some but absolute pleasure to my ears.

10. ESCROTO DE RATA – "Punk Rock Sex Basura" CD-R (Killer Pandereta)

I keep breaking my own rules. I hate CD-R's and I believe this shouldn't be on a top ten LPs list yet I can't help but list this masterpiece amongst the best of last year. The fact that the band chose to release it on a CD-R and download and not on vinyl doesn't stop me thinking of it as an LP. *Punk Rock Sex Basura* is full of degenerate *punk iberico* not unlike Larsen, TNT, or KGB. The songs are snotty and catchy with a real twisted sense of humour. They can be anthemic at times with riff progressions that sound straight off the *Punk, Que? Punk* compilation. The sonic equivalent of living in a garbage can, eating excrement, and having a go at necrophilia.

Others:

SURRENDER – "Paper Thrones" LP (Thrillhouse)
ZOMBIE ZOMBIE – "Driving This Road Until Death Sets You Free" LP (Versatile)
ANTI-PLAYAX – "Valencia Marca Registrada" LP (Trabuc)
BRAINBOMBS – "Fucking Mess" LP (Lystring)
THE ASSASSINATORS – "Sigt Efter Hjertet" LP (Alerta Antifascista)
NIFELHEIM – "Envoy of Lucifer" LP (Regain)

7"s:

1. ISTERISMO – "Non Puo Sopprimere Il Mio Conflitto" EP (Overthrow)

Japan's Isterismo brings us some serious mind-fucking hardcore on this little platter. Borrowing heavily from the almighty Wretched aesthetics and updating the desperate Italian singing style with a few layers of ultra-distorted buzz guitars and a relentless beat. The perfect mix of European hardcore circa '83 and the current mega-distorted hi-energy Japanese hardcore wave. I absolutely love the background buzz guitar that sounds like someone left his head washer on while recording the 7". Serious headache-inducing musik, as you'll expect from Overthrow.

2. CATATONIC YOUTH – "Piss Scene" EP (Hozac)

Previously released as a demo CD-R and championed by terminally bored people as the second coming of Christ, Catatonic Youth's debut was something that avoided me for a while. Once I found the record and had a chance of playing the actual plastic, it took me days to remove it from the turntable. Their caustic weird-punk update on the Metal Urbain or Chrome formula is contagious and fresh to the point of sticking to your brains for weeks. The record is noisy and distracting with crazy vocal effects and a drum machine. "I've Had It" is one of the songs of the year and the only thing I don't dig is that "Out of Control" keeps reminding me of Turbonegro for some reason. Odd.

3. KRIEGSHÖG – Hardcore Hell 7" (Hardcore Survives)

"Play loud and die" it reads the back sleeve of this hardcore monster. And that's just what I did, many,

many times as a matter of fact. I am still alive though. Hailing from Japan, Kriegshög continues the tradition of Frigora or Framtid. Japanese noisy hardcore highly influenced by the early Swedish bands, that is. Kriegshög's recording makes them sound more like Zouo than most Swedish bands, mainly because the agonizing vocal delivery. The whole record sounds tense with the aggression and intensity levels in the red as soon as the war samples that open the A-side are over and remain that way for the entire duration of the EP. They also released a split 7" with Deathtribe that is just as good.

4. BLANK DOGS – "Setting Fire to Your House / I Was Counting" (4:2:2)
I am sucker for rudimentary synth music. Call it cold wave or whatever you like, it doesn't change the fact that when it's done right, it is great. I celebrate Blank Dogs entire catalogue and believe they got the genre down to a T. This particular 7" sounds to me like a missing Decima Victima track if their Swedish members sang in English, since the guitar tone and vocal delivery are nearly identical. If you change the language and tell me it was a released from Discos Radioactivos Organizados circa 1983 I would totally believe it.

5. SEX/VID – "Nests" EP (Dom America)
Sex/Vid's third 7" is the perfect follow-up to their perfect *Tania* 7" from last year. More bad-trip music. Their guitar tune still creeps me out and their riffs are still sick. The songs are negative and the songwriting interesting while not innovative. While the A-side has two fantastic Void-esque hardcore songs, it's on the flip where the real surprise is. They manage to rewrite "I Wanna Be Your Dog" to "Always Home," turning it into a total bad-vibes anthem.

6. THE SHITTY LIMITS – "Here Are The Limits" EP (Static Shock)
These youngsters made me finally stoked on a local band! I could really have chosen any of their five 7"s but this one, being the last one, is the one I remember and find myself playing the most. The recording is sharp yet lo-fi with a borderline retarded vocal. A heavy-on-the-treble, no-distortion guitar, extremely barebones bass playing, and energetic drumming make this platter a perfect hybrid of garage punk and hardcore. Catchy and urgent without fear of sounding wrong at times.

7. FIX ME – EP (Sell Our Souls)
E-150 for me was something personal. I loved them as band and as people. Their first record came out at a time when most Spanish hardcore was third-rate derivative garbage that either put message over music or sucked NYHC cock with a little too much passion. E-150 played Hard Core the way Poison Idea did. They were fast, furious, and angry. Toward their last days, before the split-up, they were even faster, meaner, and tighter. Then came Fix Me. Fix Me recorded their 7" after their first show. They were E-150 under a new name, playing slightly slower but just as insane. The five songs plus a Siniestro Total cover that are on this record are a clear example of greatly executed angry hardcore "they way it meant to be."

8. TITMACHINE – "I Wanna Be Your Dog/Schneller" (Meeuw Muzak)
My vote for the most inept record of the year surely goes to Titmachine. Out of nowhere in the Netherlands came this piece of sonic nonsense in the finest Silver tradition. Their "I Wanna Be Your Dog" rendition is completely retarded, along the lines of Swedish Noise's "Paranoid." It seems to me that it is as easy as plugging your first guitar five minutes after you bought it, pressing REC, and destroying the simplest riff in the world. I guess that is all it takes in this day and age to get my attention.

9. THE SLOWMOTIONS – "Mystery Action / Dance" (H:G Fact)
Sixth single, if I count right. The title tracks is one of the most memorable UK77-style punk songs I've heard in a *looooong* time and the B-side is slightly more upbeat and less anthemic while still remaining an amazing tune. It is amazing how a band like Slowmotions come from Japan. It seems like their dedication and attention to detail to the new wave and late-'70s UK punk doesn't have limit.

10. SCEPTRES – "Primal Slobs Go Wild" EP (Dire)
This band falls for me in the same category as the Shitty Limits—local bands that excited me this year and that released records I couldn't stop playing. They even share two members with the 'Limits. Their infectious LA/Dangerhouse punk fronted by a female singer can bring to mind X or the more recent Gorilla Angreb. Still they have their own thing going on. The guitar job and time changes are unexpected and interesting and I love the awkward way Briany sings.

Others:
SYPHILITIC VAGINAS – "Black Motor Covenant" EP (Rescued From Life)
OBLITERATION – "Megatons" EP (NITA)
BURNT CROSS – "Freedom of Speech" EP (Tadpole)
SARA STRUMMER & THE QUEROSENOS – "Vol.1" EP (Blondes Must Die)
MASSHISTERI – "Paranoid" EP (Hell Yes)
SKIZOPHRENIA! – "Raw Punk E.A.T.E.R." EP (SKZ)

Tapes:
1. V/A – "Esta Sucia Ciudad" tape (Cintes Podrides)
2. HYGIENE – tape (self-released)
3. LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Undead Noise Transmission" (self-released)
4. DEATHRIBE – "Nothing Your Leader" tape (Hardcore Survives)
5. SYPHILITTIC VAGINAS – tape (Rescued From Life)
6. DORAID – "Alive at the Inferno vol. 03" tape (Torture Machine)
7. SURRENDER – "Live at 924 Gilman St" tape (self-released)
8. CRIMEN DE ESTADO – tape (self-released)
9. ORdER – "Kombnhat" tape (H:G Fact)
10. BRAINKILLER – tape (self-released)

STEVE SPINALI

HOMOSTUPIDS – "The Edge" EP (P. Trash)
An unpretentious celebration of the garage spirit—right down to the limited edition colored vinyl.

HIPSHAKES – "I'm Gone" EP (Die Slaughterhaus)
This Atlanta band scores with a blissfully spirited set of trashers that are charmingly Reatarded.

IV REICH – "Sucio Policia" 2xEP (Desobediencia)
Any Subterranean Kid will fall for the scratchy, highly political songs on these disks.

MARKED MEN – "Fortune / Like Robots" (Dirtnap)
I've always had a painful weakness for pop-punk, and a combo of ripping energy and stick-to-the-ribs hooks is hard to argue.

NERVES – "One Way Ticket" LP (Alive)
This essential reissue contains a series of brilliant moments in early pop-punk history that would stylistically pave the way for the genre.

REPERCUSSIONS – "No Peace" EP (Feral Ward)
Intense, distinctive, original HC.

SUBHUMANS – "Death Was Too Kind" LP (Alternative Tentacles)
This Vancouver band had the balls to back up their words; in my opinion, Canada's best.

TULSA – "Sour Dogs" LP (Starcleaner)
This has a raw, wild sound that's almost like walking into a great live set.

TYVEK – "Needles Drop" 2x7" (What's Your Rupture?)
Tyvek are best on disk, and this Detroit band plays unique, abrasive punk/post-punk.

USERS – "Secondary Modern" CD (Bin Liner)
At its best, this slab of crunchy '77 punk captures the celebrated Raw Records sound; a remarkable reissue rich with snappy riffs and hooks.

JESSICA MILLS

In alphabetical order:

1. AMEBIX – "No Sanctuary: The Spiderleg Recordings" CD (Alternative Tentacles)
I cannot get enough of this historical, dark, heavy music. No Gods No Masters!

2. BLACK RAINBOW – "Pin Pricks" EP (Thrillhouse)
The vocals! The vocals! The vocals!

3. EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING – "Demon's Demands / I'm Guilty" (Iron Lung)
Rather good garage punk destined for greatness.

4. 50 MILLION – "Broad Side of a Barn & Shit on a Single" CD (Starcleaner)
A 37-song anthology of one of my all time favorite bands!

5. INVASIÓN – "La Caza" 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Dirty, raw, and reverb!

6. IRON LUNG / HATRED SURGE – "Broken" EP (Iron Lung)
For all the fellow nerds, can you say edition #52/100?

7. KIM PHUC – "Wormwood Star / Freak Out the Squares" (Criminal IQ)
Who doesn't like shitting on Republican graves?

8. ONION FLAVORED RINGS – "Perfect Evolution" EP (Thrillhouse)
This rough rockin' pop delivers maximum danceability around the living room with the kids!

9. STRAIGHTJACKET NATION – "Cheap Kicks" LP (Shortfuse)
Ass-kicking debut LP!

10. WALLS – LP (Painkiller)
Makes me miss Seattle like crazy.

FRED SCHRUNK

Looking back on the year's worth of releases, I'm left with the feeling that it was a pretty mediocre year for records. BUT, the records that stood out were really good. The ones that made my top ten are records I'll be listening to far into the future. This, in no specific order, is my top ten of 2008.

BANANAS – "New Animals" LP (Recess)
This album carried with it the most anticipation of any record all year, for me at least. I had incredibly high hopes for it but I feared I was setting myself up for a giant letdown. Could they still write good songs after three albums and 15 years of playing together? Rarely are bands able to make four solid albums. Think about it—how many can you name that put out four really good full-lengths? I can probably count them on one hand. Long story short, this album not only met my expectations but exceeded them! Don't get me wrong—this is no *Slippery Subject*, but this is a really, really good album. Classic Bananas. If you like pop punk even a little bit, you most listen to this album. They play really fast, super trashy, incredibly catchy, and zero bubblegum. You know all those things you hate about pop punk? They do none of that. It's just pure rock and roll fun. This would be my pick for best album of the year if it wasn't for the Shotwell LP.

SHOTWELL – "Patriot" LP (Thrillhouse)
So last year when I was writing my top ten, I decided to not include any records I put out, just 'cause I thought it would be weird to do so. When the zine finally showed up, I picked it up and read everyone's top ten, and right next to my mine was Ken's where he proudly proclaimed that the records he put out were his favorite of the year. He puts out records 'cause he really loves the music, and I respected that. This year I'm not going write about all the Thrillhouse Records, but I felt I had to mention at least Shotwell. Honestly, these guys are my favorite band still playing music, and objectively speaking, I think this is their best output. They are Stiff Little Fingers meets the Clash with huge mid-'90s Bay Area overtones. I liked what Paul Lucich wrote in his review of the album: "If I worshipped at the altar of '90s Bay Area pop punk or championed the revival of sorts spearheaded by the likes of Shang-a-Lang or Tulsa, then I'd have a boner right now that would shatter heaven." I think that describes my feeling pretty well.

DILLINGER FOUR – "Civil War" LP (Fat Wreck)
This was one record I gave up on before it even came out. As a teenager growing up in Minneapolis, I was fortunate enough to see these guys play countless times, thanks in large part to my friend, Ben. Dillinger Four was my introduction to what real punk rock was and probably shaped who I am today more than any other band. So to say I have a soft spot for the band is a gross understatement. I'd been hearing about their alleged "new album" for years. In the summer of 2007, I purposely planned a tour so I could be in Minneapolis for 4th of July—or, as the show was called, "The Dillinger Fourth of July." But, to be honest, their set totally bummed me out. It felt like they were just going through the motions, their new songs sounded mediocre, and when Patty got naked his girlfriend got on stage and started playing with his wiener. It was weird. Not my thing. So when I heard about the new album coming out, I wasn't excited. I listened to it one time and it didn't even make my top ten for the month. But a few weeks later I gave it another chance, and I liked it more. Then I started listening to it more...and more...and all of sudden I was listening to it everyday. It totally grew on me. Now I'm to the point where I think its one of the best records to come out all year, and I'm willing to forget Dillinger Fourth of July ever happened.

SOMETHING'S WRONG – "Ghost Bike" EP (Other)
A couple months ago I got this album for review, and it blew my mind. I thought it sounded like This Is My Fist, and the lady singing had a total Mia Zapata thing going on. It was super fast, dirty, catchy—a solid 7". I gave it a glowing review and said it was the best record I listened to all month. Several weeks later, Something's Wrong came through town on tour, and played the basement at my house. When they walked in the house, one of the first things they said was "Oh look, it's the new *MRR*, I wonder if our record got reviewed in this one". Then they proceed to read it out loud and at the end they asked us if we knew "who Fred Schrunk was?"—at which time everyone turned and looked at me. That was embarrassing. But I stand by it—the record rules and it sucks they broke up already.

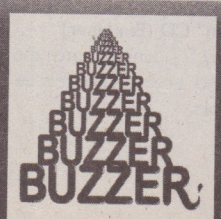
SONGS FOR MOMS – "The Worse It Gets, the Better" LP (Starcleaner)
This is a hard one to find the words to express. I love this album and I love this band. They have been playing around the Bay Area for two or three years now and have gotten progressively better which each passing month. They are now one of the most exciting bands here. At times they're tuneful, bouncy, and melodic, but then they'll switch gears and be screaming and totally aggressive. Like a riot-grrrl-infused This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb. That is a bad description of them. They are a totally unique band: gritty, bittersweet, and intense. You must listen to this.

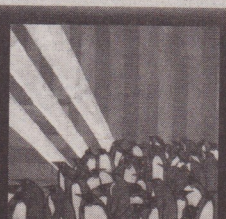
MARKED MEN – "Fortune / Like Robots" (Dirtnap)
An incredible single that gives me high hopes for the coming full-length record. The A-side is a fast dirty pop gem that will be stuck in your head for weeks. It's high on my list of best Marked Men songs. This will end up on most mix tapes I make in the coming year. The B-side is the perfect companion track—way less poppy but it rocks just as hard. This is everything you want out of a single.

V/A – "We Do What We Want" EP (Rumbletowne)
This 7" is a compilation of bands from Olympia, and it perfectly describes why I'm fucking stoked on their scene right now. Every song on this comp totally rips, especially the Shorebirds and Hooky tracks. Man, Hooky could have been one of the best bands ever if they would have just stayed together long enough. Do yourself a favor and write to Rumbletowne Records asking for a copy of the Hooky demo along with this comp. The comp is screen-printed and comes with a huge zine made by the bands. You can tell a lot of love went into creating this record.

YOUR PEST BAND – "Your Pest Record" and split w/ Miscasts (Snuffy Smiles)
The best new pop punk band out of Japan right now. You can always count on Snuffy Smile to find amazing new pop punk bands. They are one label that is constantly putting out records and I will always buy whatever they put out 'cause I know it's going to be at least good. I have yet to be let down. From this past year, Your Pest Band was probably my favorite group I was introduced to through Snuffy Smile. Early '90s Bay-Area-influenced punk played by Japanese maniacs. Out of control!

GRASS WIDOW – Demo cassette (Brown Interior Music)
This demo and the Hooky demo were the two best I heard all year. Grass Widow is a brand new band out of the Bay Area that I am totally blown away by. These ladies do a Raincoats-style garage rock thing, but they produce these harmonies that will leave you speechless. From what I understand, the local label Make a Mess Records is going to be pressing the demo and some additional tracks on to a 12". If this happens, you must check it out.





D X

Nationalism in ten points.
Thankyou.

EXTORTION – "Terminal Cancer" EP (Shortfuse)
Raw as piss is fuckin' right, and just made the 2008 shelf. Horrific-sounding fast music.

DEAF WISH – CDR (Deaf Wish)
Hand-spray-painted CDRs, acid fuelled mid-'80s SST-sounding guitar punk shit… like Dinosaur, noisy Sonic Youth and the bratty energy of Red Kross. They did a 7" last year and there's a new one out soon.

PATHETIC HUMAN – "Unexpected Death" tape (Stained Circles)
They've done a couple tapes and a 7" this year, and it's a total jerk-off to list this, but it's the best of them! Power violent.

NAKED ON THE VAGUE – "Blood Pressure Sessions" LP (Siltbreeze)
I believe this record came to attention courtesy of the Siltbreeze vinyl release in 2008, so that's why I'm listing it. I spent hours flipping this over and over while reading books about mind control and assassinations. Damaged goth/synth noise.

CUT SICK – "Fraudulent Little Fuckers" EP (Aarght)
Fastest punk record of the year. Fucking ridiculous. Sounds like anything else on 78rpm.

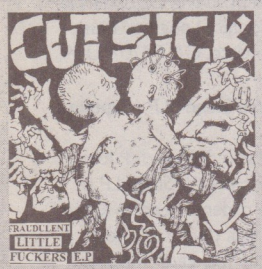
THE STABS – "Split Lips" EP (Stained Circles)
Jerk-off number two, but one of my favourite Australian bands have finally released a new record, and it's sick. "Blood Red River" rewritten with as much sleaze and grit.

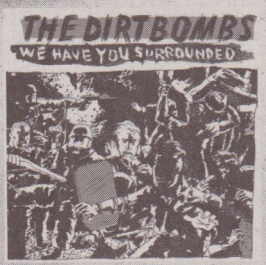
OOGA BOOGAS – "Romance and Adventure" LP (Aarght)
Guitars.

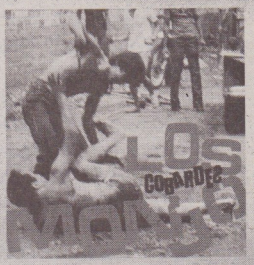
EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING / UV RACE – split tape (Aarght / Stained Circles)
Final jerk-off for the list, promise. *Primary Colours* would have made the list, but I prefer how the songs sound on this tape—raw and ignorant, a great thing to be a part of.

NUCLEAR SEX ADDICT – Demo (NSA)
Ripping noise-core from this short-lived and now defunct band of Melbourne Confuse fanatics.

MASSTRAUMA – "The Adoration of the Devil's Ass" EP (Endless Blockades)
Thrash from Sydney, really idiotic and drooling, totally high-class band.







MARTIN SORRENDEGUY

Gauze – "Binbou Yusuri No Rizumu Ni Notte" LP (Prank)
After listening to hardcore for so many years, I've decided that very few bands have been able to progress in a way that does not fall into crappy metal/rock/pop or whatever other genre for which I could care less. Gauze has consistently pushed the boundaries of what most consider hardcore, never loosing an ounce of energy and power after all these years. Fuck all the suckers that chumped out on those who have stuck it out. Gauze rules!

LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Near Dark" LP (Wicked Witch)
This release squeezed into the year-end top ten and my list of faves. The record is chaotic and desperate in sound. If you are a fan of polished production, stay way clear of this. Noise is part of the recipe here. Killer!

SEX/VID – "Communal Living" 12" (Dom America)
Things have come around for me again with Sex/Vid. I was not too hot on the last project but this 12" gets to the bones. It has got speed, frantic energy, and tons of hooks. Don't let the tie-dye shirts scare you away and please do your best at tuning out the hipster garbage that clouds around this band. If it gets too close, draw fucking blood.

QUESTION – "Insanity" EP (Fashionable Idiots)
Rips and tears through six tracks of crazy and intense hardcore punk. The attitude plus what this band puts forth pushes this release to the top of my listening pile. Great shit here and Saira's vocals are great to hear again.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE – "Raw Energy" EP (Sorry State)
Great stuff on this EP. Musicianship is evident with Double Negative cuz these guys know how to compose a killer hardcore record. I am still paying attention—keep 'em coming.

VIOLENT ARREST – "Criminal Record" 2xEP (No Way/Grave Mistake)
UK chaos from these hardcore vets carved on a double-7" release. Fast and driving tunes that have my fist pumping in the air. Great fucking record.

REPERCUSSIONS – "No Peace" EP (Feral Ward)
Not fucking cute! This pounds the crap out of most sad-ass records trying to pass as hardcore these days. While tons of pimply-faced teen-core bands write whiny songs about not being able to skate, Repercussions get into the more cryptic and dark side of one's mind.

REPROBATES – "Stress" EP (No Way)
Feedback, in a classic Midwest style a la Die Kreuzen with the right speed and energy make this a fucking cool record. The vocalist has a whole lot of snot to his snarl and it works for me. Cool!

ISTERISMO – "Non Puo Sopprimere Il Mio Conflitto" EP (Overthrow)
Japan punks giving us some Italian punk worship. Chaos non musica!! Great first EP; over-the-top without being ridiculous. One can't help but think about Wretched when first giving this disc a spin. Great live band as well.

KRIEGSHÖG – "Hardcore Hell" EP (HeartFirst)
Drum roll, please… This here is the best fucking record of the year!! I have abused my neighbors, lovers, and friends with the insanity that drips from this piece of plastic. I can't get enough of this record. It has brought chills to my spine, made me blow a speaker, and acted as the mental soundtrack to my imaginary drive-by-shootings at last year's Republican Convention. Fucking ridiculously good.

Runner-Ups:
VOGUE – "Dickfaced" LP (Holy Shit)
WARCRY – "Not So Distant Future" LP (Feral Ward)
CRUDE – "Just Go Ahead" EP (H:G Fact)
ACID REFLUX "Secret Power" EP (No Way)

Top Ten Reissues:
LES VANDALES – "Loup-Garou" EP (self-released)
IV REICH – "Demo" 2xEP (Desobediencia)
LEUZEMIA – LP (Lengua Armada)
SHIT S.A. – CD (BCore)
SYSTEMATIC DEATH – "Systemania vol. 1 & 2" 2xLPs (Partners in Crime)
ULTIMO RESORTE – "La Larga Sombra Del Punk" LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
TYRANNA – "Back Off Baby" EP (Boppa Do Down)
KAOS – "Ayacucho Centro de Opresion" EP (Sintemores/Odio los Discos/Discos Huayno Amargo)
DIE KREUZEN – LP (Touch & Go)
MIDDLE CLASS – "Out of Vogue: The Early Material" LP (Frontier)

BRUCE ROEHRS

NEVER HEALED – "Forever Never Ends" CD (Parts Unknown)
Fuck all! Casey and his mugs tore down the fucking walls with their *Forever Never Ends* CD in the year 2008!! This shit is so discomforting, so ill at ease, you fucking weak-ass punks better run for fucking cover! Never Healed fucking smashes through "Forever Never Ends," "Ruins," "Lonely Crawls," "Of Wind and Smoke" and alight on "Waits to Destroy." You little fucks better get the fuck out of the way! This is hardcore with the capital "H"!! Without any warning you are subjected to "Where the Crosses Grow" and you now know that you are truly fucked! The hardcore blisters with "We Are Ruins," "Far We Fall," and "The March." Then you lucky fucks get to the Never Healed anthem "War All the Time." Yes! You are condemned to repeat all the fucking stupid mistakes that you have made repeatedly over the last five years! You little fucks are completely screwed! You better enjoy the ride, because Never Healed has observed your plight completely without pity and has elected to watch you destroy yourself!

THE WRETCHED ONES – "Stuck in a Rut / Lady Boss" (Headache)
Fucking A! New Jersey's skinhead stalwarts have culled two great tunes from their *Make It Happen* CD from last year! The two tunes featured here on the Wretched Ones' Headache Records 7" are "Lady Boss" and the stunning A-side "Rut" about the travails of working every day… "Looking forward to my beer / Get home, got big plans / Fall asleep on the couch / Guess what—I'm stuck in a rut." (We're paraphrasing here.) No other skinhead band in the USA embraces the working class ethic as well as the Wretched Ones! Contact Armen at Headache Records, PO Box 204, Midland Park, NJ, 07432, www.headacherecords.com.

VIOLENT ARREST – "Criminal Record" 2xEP (Grave Mistake/No Way)
Fuck! Violent Arrest from the UK (with a pedigree that includes Heresy and Ripcord) has issued a fucking destroyer of a double 7" on Grave Mistake/No Way Records last year! The EP is entitled *Criminal Record* and this shit burns your eyeballs out! This rough and tumble hardcore rambos through "VA," "In Ruins," "Halt," "Bigot," "Shit for Brains," and "Suicide Squad." This is relentless HC performed by men who knew thrash music in the day and still exhibit all the bad qualities we look for in a brute-force hardcore band. Record two of this package is equally uncompromising with tunes like "Barren," "Liars," "Retribution," "Youth Violence," "Cheat," and "Riot." Pay attention, you fucks! This is absolutely earth-shaking hardcore from England!

REPROBATES – "Stress" EP (No Way)
These ne'er-do-wells slam through "Failure," "Rat Maze," "Stress," "Abandoned City," and "Gone To Shit"—this is another triumph for the mighty No Way Records! This is so foul, so noisy, so unlistenable... Clearly one of the top ten best punk bands of the year!

DOUBLE NEGATIVE – "Raw Energy" EP (Sorry State)
Fuck! This Double Negative *Raw Energy* EP is blistering hardcore from Raleigh, North Carolina with ex-members of Subculture and other legendary NC bands. This shit is as raw and noisy as hardcore punk gets!

DISCO ASSAULT – "Saturday Night Bleeder" EP (Schizophrenic)
Disco Assault has followed their brilliant top-ten demo from two years ago with a scorching 7" on Schizophrenic Records out of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. This blazing five-song EP contains four originals and a Roach Motel cover. This Disco Assault shit is ferocious punk rock!! Side one hammers you with "My Fate" and "Work to Survive" and just when you thought it was safe to emerge, Disco Assault smashes you with "Homeland Security" on side two. Fucking brilliant! Brutish punk with a capital "P"! Side two finishes you off with a great song… "Asshole Stare."

AVSKUM – "Uppror Underifrån" LP (Prank)
Fucking A! Mr. Ken Sanderson stunned the punk rock world again with the current Avskum LP on Prank Records. This is the new LP from these veteran punks from Sweden who have been damaging eardrums in Europe since the early '80s with their legendary *Crucified by the System* EP.

ALTERNATE ACTION – "Thin Line" CD (Longshot / Bords De Seine)
Hey skinheads! Alternate Action from Canada has a great new CD that compiles all their work to date. Included are the *We're Not Like You* EP and the split 7" with Marching Orders from Australia on Longshot Music and the *Tough Times* 10" EP from Narayan Records. You also get three previously unreleased songs that are consistently good. This is great skinhead street rock with strong Oi! underpinnings! You must have this! Contact Longshot Music at 980 Harrison St., San Francisco, CA, 94107, USA, www.longshotmusic.com.

COCKSPARRER – "Here We Stand" LP (Captain Oi!)
Hey skins and punks! Surely you dribble-dick losers have heard the Cocksparrer *Here We Stand* LP by now… You snot-nosed little rodents need to know this: The record of the year was clearly this new Cocksparrer LP!! On "To Little Too Late" these veteran punks sing: "I'll bet you think it will be forgotten / No way—too much too little too late!" You can clearly see that a bitter, unforgiving attitude prevails. Some other outstanding tunes on the *Here We Stand* LP are "Be True to Yourself" and "Did You Have A Good Life Without Me." Get this record from Captain Oi! Records out of England now!!

TRAVIS FRISTOE

2008 tops ten by Travis Fristoe, book reviewer.

ALGERNON CADWALLADER – "Some Kind of Cadwallader" LP (self-released)
May as well just say it upfront—they sound exactly like Cap'n Jazz. Which in 2008 can be a curious thing. One guy even has Dave Diem's twelve-hour perm. But the songs remain seemingly devoid of irony, and they're playing in punk spaces, so I'll be there.

AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER – "Crust Never Sleeps" tape (Vinyl Rites)
The cover art looks like either an aerial view of a hot dog or a side view of a hamburger. Which, if you know Jason, makes total sense. There's going to be a lot of tapes and Southeast music on this list, so just deal with it. Liner notes say, "Animals were mortally wounded in the making of this tape—you are touching blood. Wrestling is real. P.S. I love Morrissey."

BAD YEAR – demo
When played with proper focused abandon, hardcore is the best thing on Earth. And seeing a new Gainesville band this focused and fun is a true reminder. Go Kara! Their songs have this feral, charging energy but never in a single or linear direction, so you're amped the entire time.

BLACK RAINBOW – "Pin Prick" EP (Thrillhouse)
Both of their 2008 7"s are beautiful, glorious things, but I'm going with the first one for its zine-aesthetic and huge insert. There's something about Ivy's voice and Erick's guitar alchemically coming together in "Brownfields" that I wish would never stop—tough, bittersweet, guardedly hopeful, and totally committed.

BOYRACER – "Sunlight Is the Best Antiseptic" LP (555)
Recorded in Steward's solar-powered home-studio and limited to 100 copies, so look out. As good as any of the other thousand Boyracer records of short, crashing pop songs, but this one seems sharper lyrically, more poignant about sticking with this life.

TUBERS / BRAINWORMS – split EP (Bakery Outlet/Rorschach/Dead Tank)
Still more from Florida. Each side gives a few original songs, and a choice cover—the Tubers doing Lemonheads and Brainworms daring to cover Rites of Spring. The cover art is the equivalent of flip-flops and beer coozies, but what can you do? Tubers remain our secret weapon—small amps, total sweethearts, these faithful riffs, and their songs keep getting better.

DEAD FRIENDS / BRAINSTORM – "Kurt's Dead. This Sucks" tape (Vinyl Rites)
Yeah, there's a lot of cassettes on this list—deal with it. Two local hardcore bands sharing a drummer on this silkscreened cassette. Both consistently play the sort of live sets that make you glad you never gave up on DIY music. Pounding hardcore with these wild and fleeting grunge parts, and I mean that as a compliment.

JAMMY DODGERS / NERVOUS DOGS – "Unintentional" split 45
The story is that two separate Gainesville 7"s were being pressed at the same time. Both rushed so that they could be out in time for the Fest. What came in the mail was a record with two B-sides put together. But neither Chris nor Replay Dave let things like that bother them. So rather than use the records as beer plates or landfill, they made covers and released it to a curious public.

LA CARA OCULTA – "Del Rock 'n' Roll" EP (TPV)
Four unabashedly Ramones-loving songs. In Spanish. From a local band. Go Matty D! One of the three inserts recommends the rock as an anti-depressant. True.

Life During Wartime – Audiozine #9
Yet another topically great and well-constructed issue of Erin's audiozine. This one's about the dudes who find a Velvet Underground acetate at a yard sale. Their subsequent follies trying to sell the record in the age of the internet makes for both fine journalism and a fun listen. The narrative's split by songs and there's a great Moe Tucker portrait on the cover.

VINNIE LA RUSSA

Oi.

This was a good year for me. And you? I am happy to hear it was swell. You know who else it was a good year for? The 'CORE. The 'CORE had a great batting average during this period of moons. It's been a while since I bought this many new records and felt such little remorse. Maybe punk and I have sized each other up enough times that I can pick the winning horses, or maybe it was just dumb luck. Whatever the case or cause, I'm feeling good about this year's take.

First few are in order of appreciation, rest are alphabetized. Enjoy.

RAJOITUS – "Maailman Hautajainen" LP (Putrid Filth Conspiracy)

This is my record of the year. It got me through some rough mornings. Cup of coffee, horrible taste in my mouth, fresh scent of malt-liquor on my pajamas: I feel like death incarnate. Place this record on the turntable and my synapses begin to fire…intro to the first song—pick slide on the guitar and triplet from the drummer—starting to warm up. Into the opening riff and I feel invincible, disavowing all of the *I'm-never-going-to-drink-again* sentiments and promises I just thought and made. Besides their magical hangover-curing properties, this record is a perfect hybrid of early Swedish and Finnish HC, played tight and heavily. Fucking-hell here you go: release of the year. RIP Rajoitus.

KRIEGSHÖG – "Hardcore Hell" EP (Hardcore Survives)

Tell me there's a band that sounds like Kuro and Anti-Cimex and I'll sell you my left (last) kidney. Read about them on a message board, ordered fifteen copies of this single for my burgeoning distro, received three and the rest of my money—*all sold out*. Gave one to *MRR* for the library, one to Blind Justin, kept one for myself, and the rest is Popsike history. Not sure on the accuracy of the original description, but I don't fucking care; this record is pure insanity. The B-side starts with bombs, guns, and crying. Switch to the instruments and it's feedback and noise with everything in the red. "Play Loud and Die!" Thank you, my sentiments exactly.

SEX/VID – "Communal Living" 12" (Dom America) & live on July 4th in a backyard

I'm sure this band will be a common denominator amongst this year's top ten cognoscenti, but it's for good reason. You know, Sex/Vid is not doing anything new—they're rolling the same wheel as many others, they've not reinvented it—but they're just doing it so much better than all the others. Hints of Void, Crossed Out, and an underlying element of psychedelia congeal to create heavy riffs and incredible songs. They graced their rabid Bay Area fans for a few days during the middle of this past summer. On the 4th of July, they played a backyard show, and by the time they set up I was loose and feeling great. And when they played "Tania" I was feeling strong and invincible and dislocated some random guy's arm. Of course I didn't mean to, and only learned about it later in the afternoon when he told me. I was apologetic, he thought it was funny, and we all drank some more. Thanks, Uncle Sam.

PARASITESGO! – "Lettuce" demo

This little tape of jams was heads above many of the other releases I found this year. Six songs of pop-punk glory from a gang of kids who hail from the far-reaches of the East Bay. I've not listened to bands of this ilk for many a moon, and maybe that's because my interests lie in other aspects of the punk rock subculture and music, or maybe it's because the songs are not as good as they once were. But until I figure all that out, I'll keep listening to this demo. Thanks, dudes, you rule.

CRIMINAL DAMAGE – Live at the Knockout

Criminal Damage releases first LP. Vinnie does not buy. People go berserk. Vinnie complains that the masses are making too much noise. Criminal Damage releases second LP. The masses are ecstatic again. Vinnie is too busy vacuuming his kitchen. Criminal Damage does tour with Subhumans (UK). Criminal Damage plays at the big rock club on the tall stage. Vinnie enjoys songs and smiles, but passes on the t-shirt. Criminal Damage plays the next weekend at the local bar with the small stage and shitty sound-system. *Vinnie is amazed*. Holy fucking hell. What a great band. Please visit us again soon. Please release some new tunes.

INMATES – "Now We Talking Hardcore" EP (Even Worse)

After eons upon eons, Cleveland maniacs release new EP. Scratch that. After too long of a wait, HC fanatics of the greater Cleveland area grace us with a new batch of material. Scratch that too. Old dudes from the Midwest who have been repping bands and records you and I buy through eBay for large sums of money make new record and it fucking slays. Scummy, nasty, fast, and heavy, this record is a must for all.

MÖRPHEME & LEBENDEN TOTEN – Live at Thrillhouse

It's a bad sign when a band arrives to a show with almost no equipment then proceeds for more than 30 minutes to organize the gear they've scavenged to play. I recognized the guitarist of Mörpheme as a kid I'd seen around as he set up the bass rig ("OK"), a row of pedals for the mic ("what?"), a dilapidated drum set ("uh-oh"), and then his own, nice, American-made Fender Telecaster ("wait, what?"). Though I had few expectations, I was quickly blown the fuck away; simply, Mörpheme fucking slayed. Similar to extreme, noisy acts previous to them, most notably Psycho Sin and the very obscure Toxo-Vomit *Crisis of Life* flexi (check out www.shit-fi.com), Mörpheme was so fucking great, it was incredible. Every song ended with the singer on his knees screaming "Oh my god" or something along those lines. Later that night, Lebenden Toten played and of course I was again amazed by how great those Portland punks are—but since that night, when discussing the show, the talk of the town always returns to the former: "Did you get to see Mörpheme…amazing, yes, I know."

NEEDLES – "Twisted Vision" EP (Lengua Armada / Bad Skulls)

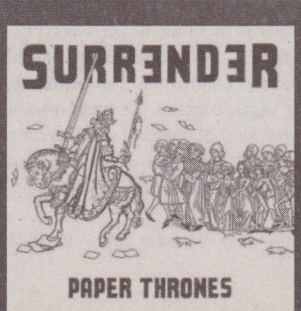
This is a no-brainer for me. Talk Is Poison was incredible, so reuniting the rhythm section is only a win-win situation. The riffs and songwriting are slightly more sophisticated than the former act, but, while I won't be so brazen to make the claim that Needles is greater than Talk Is Poison, they sure as fuck are doing an incredible job. I hope to hear a new recording sometime soon.

NOMEANSNO – "0+2=1" & "The Day Everything Became Isolated and Destroyed" 2xLP resiusses (Wrong)

Reissues of three seminal NoMeansNo albums…Andy Kerr's Telecaster is still gracing the tracks, the Wright bros have yet to call upon Tom Holliston and his Les Paul axe to help out the entity simply and repetitively known as NoMeansNo. My favorite has always been *Wrong*—whose isn't?—but these three are undeniably amazing albums that still blow my mind with their creativity and talent. Some of the finest moments for this very fine band. While I already had the originals—who doesn't?—they've never sounded better. I'm convinced it's either the thicker vinyl, or an outstanding job of remastering the original tapes, or just plain magic, that makes these tracks sound sweeter than I could ever imagine. Do yourself a favor and track these down.

SYSTEMATIC DEATH – "Systemania Volume 1" 2xLP (Partners in Crime)

I wish I could also add *live* to this one, but the stars were not aligned for me and Systema to enjoin and become one during their recent US tour. This band has been a favorite of mine since I first heard the *Thrash Till Death* LP and originally doubted the singer's gender due to what looks like a barrette in Shigeru-san's hair. Apologies. Seminal Japanese HC-thrash at its finest, this superlative volume chronicles the early moments of these pioneers and features rare releases and an unreleased recording session. Early versions, non-heard versions…just plain amazing. Thanks, Partners in Crime!



KENNY KAOS

Kenny Kaos's Top (mostly) 7" records of 2008, In No Particular Order

SHITTY LIMITS – "Yesterday's Heroes" EP (Limits)
This could just have easily been any one of the other three 7" records that Shitty Limits put out in the last year. They are that good. I have always been a fan of hardcore, but I have a hard time getting worked up about most hardcore that gets put to vinyl. I find that very little of it differentiates itself in any way. These guys *are* different. Their intensity reminds me of Minor Threat. Their delivery is slightly disjointed. Their reference to Wire lyrics isn't their only similarity to that band. Good shit(ty). Look for their other records on Dire, Keep Screaming and La Vida Es Un Mus Discos.

MARVELOUS DARLINGS – "I Don't Wanna Go to the Party / Careerist" (Deranged)
This is, without any doubt, at least in my mind, one of the greatest power-pop gems ever put to vinyl. Seriously, this isn't just "Best of 2008" material; this will stand the test of time and be considered classic Canadian power pop, along with songs by the likes of The Pointed Sticks, The Diodes, The Forgotten Rebels, and even Culture Shock.

POPPETS – "Get Back" EP (Plastic Idol)
This two-piece is the latest of Magnus Sellergren's projects. Other bands have included The Dialtones, The Plastiques and The Heartattacks. As with the others, the songs are short, faster-paced, raw, and catchy as all fuck. Make no mistake about it—this is bubblegum-free. This one's got the added benefit of a female vocalist to accompany Magnus. Incidentally, one of the "other" bands mentioned, The Heartattacks, had a record ("Stay/Go") come out on Plastic Idol that also deserved to be on this list. Poppets win by the flip of a coin.

DETROIT COBRAS – "Original Recordings" LP (Munster)
This band managed to stay under my radar for a number of years. I mean, how seriously can you really take a band that plays nothing but covers of old rock, soul, R&B and blues songs that nobody has ever heard of? If you are not hip to this by now, don't be embarrassed or ashamed. Instead, pull your head out of your ass (as I did), go out and buy one of their records, even this one if you like. Take it home and listen to it. You will find yourself compelled to go in search of all the others.

GENTLEMAN JESSE / JOSEPH PLUNKET – split 45 (Rob's House)
Don't get me wrong, the J.P. track is a standout, but the G.J. track, like most (all?) of his others, is just amazing. This guy manages to be part power-pop, part punk rock, and very much Americana, without being at all cheesy. His solo LP (on Douchemaster) deserves its own spot on this list. I won't even bother to mention that this guy has serious punk rock street creds.

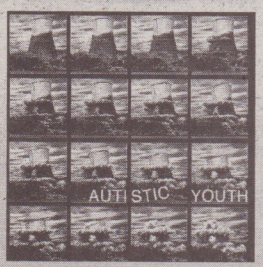
BABY SHAKES – "The First One" LP (Douchemaster)
This is another that proves that I am a total sucker for power-pop, particularly when it has got a female vocalist going for it. Maybe it's the bubblegum thing. When I set out to put this list together originally, I wanted to include only 7" records. This record made that impossible. It's got the added benefit of some jangly '60s guitars. They also put out tasty heart-shaped 10" red vinyl EP on Rob's House this year.

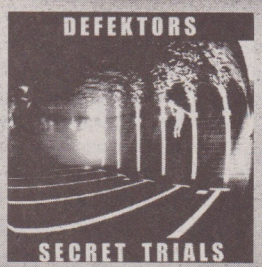
LOVER! / LIVE FAST DIE – split EP (Douchemaster)
This is the only record that made this list because of a single song, "Booger in My Asshole," and not because of the band. *American Idol* and/or the Top 40 have made a case for years that lousy lyrics can't always bring a song to the ground. I get the feeling that Lover! felt they needed to really put this to the test. The melody is poppy and punky and new wavy and the lyrics are not just gross, they're really kind of stupid. But the concept is funny as hell.

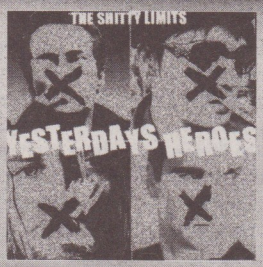
BLEW-UP! – "On Fire" EP (Relax-O-Matic Vibrator)
Like their Scandinavian friends to the north, the members of France's Blew-up! have an appreciation of rock music history. They deliver punk that just doesn't borrow from old punk or old hardcore, it borrows from the history of rock 'n' roll. It also happens to be a damn good record.

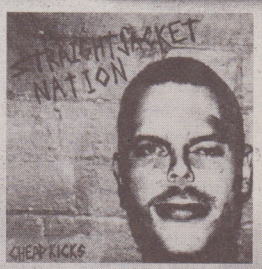
THE PLEASURE KILLS – "Smash Up the Radio / Over and Over" (Polypore)
This is pure new wave/female vocals/(power) pop heaven. It's infectious. It's that simple. Seriously, place the record on the turntable, drop the needle, bounce your head, tap your feet, enjoy. It's not rocket science, folks. They had a second 7" ("Mission Boy/Pictures on the Floor") come out this year that was equally as good.

HEX DISPENSERS – "Lose My Cool" EP (Douchemaster)
2008 was a year that, for me at least, had a lot of great punk music that didn't just take old punk formulas and simply improve on them. This record is a great example of that. You can draw comparisons to other music, for sure, but these guys really do have their own sound. It's kind of head bouncy and all that, but there's a certain Wipers sort of darkness to it. When a record is difficult to describe, it usually means one of two things for me: either it's really crappy or it's pretty great. I'll leave it at that.









JULZ GENERIC

I had qualms about writing this list, because I feel like I spent most of this year listening to the same dubbed Infect/Men's Recovery Project tape and watching ironic European grindcore bands, and not keeping up with what was happening release-wise. However, I now live in a tundra with a mail-order addict, and thusly here is my askew list of 2008-released gems.

1. STRAIGHTJACKET NATION – "Cheap Kicks" LP (Shortfuse)
It's like the band is a perfectly logical extension of the singer's crucial Australian zine, *Distort*.

2. BLANK STARE – LP (Refused)
Angry, angry, fast SXE hardcore. Next level. Oft-addressed contention is their friends' irresponsible sexual choices. Love it.

3. THE ENDLESS BLOCKADE – "Primitive" LP (20 Buck Spin)
Legitimate powerviolence. Serious Canadian hatred.

4. SACRED SHOCK – "For a Living" EP (Schizophrenic)
Super catchy D-beat from Austin's sweethearts.

5. GENETIC ANGRY – "Thoughts / Change" (Sewercide)
I only heard this like a week ago. Black Flag mixed with Black Sabbath from Nowhere, Nova Scotia. This is good.

6. VILE NATION – "Up All Night" EP (Cowabunga)
Equal perfect parts of noisy and snotty. The drum part of the intro alone makes this record worth checking out. Shit makes my head want to explode—in a good way, of course.

7. EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING – "Primary Colours" LP (Goner)
If you have heard the song "Which Way to Go" and you haven't had it stuck in your head since, you don't have a pulse.

8. PIERCED ARROWS – "Straight to the Heart" LP (Tombstone)
Way killer jams. Music to get stoked to grow old to.

9. LIBYANS – "Welcome to the Neighborhood" EP (Shock to the System)
I missed this band when they played at ABC No Rio because I was off buying a fucking vegan cupcake. I've been re-evaluating what kind of person I've become and what kind of person I want to be since; especially after hearing this record.

10. AUTISTIC YOUTH – "Smash and Kill" EP (Rock Bottom), split w/ Cola Freaks (Taken by Surprise / Sabotage / Blackwater), & split w/ Estranged (Blackwater)
Portland kid punks have gotten totally fucking accomplished.

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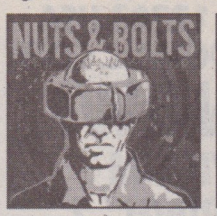

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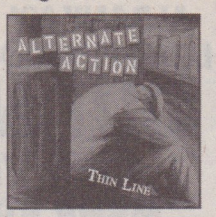

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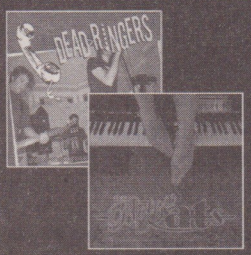

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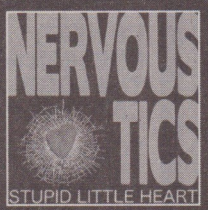

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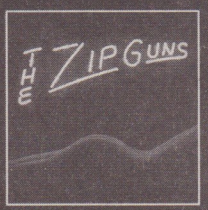

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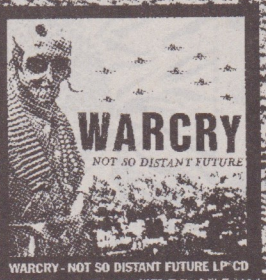

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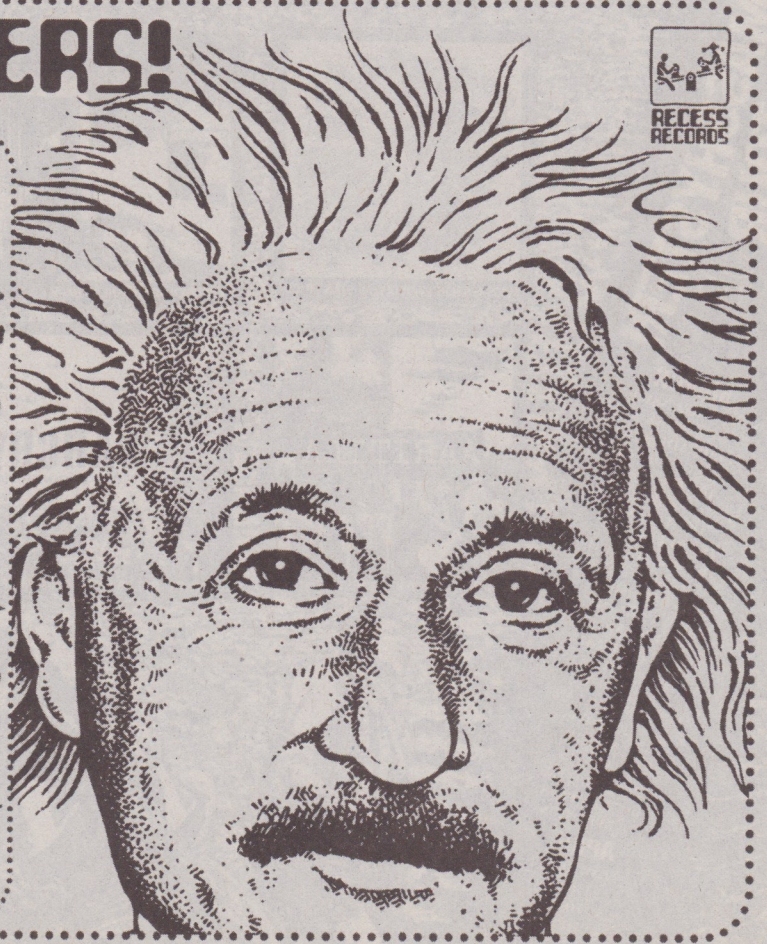


JOHN FAHY

CULT RITUAL – "Haunted Ground" EP (Youth Attack!)
I really don't like what this label is doing, but I'll be damned if this isn't one of the best records out there. Hardcore that pulls you in with catchy riffs then repels you with ugliness, noise, and hate. The best track to me is easily the B-side's "Civilized," a song that will not leave your head for days after first listen for its catchy chorus and hit-the-nail-on-the-head, substantive, accusatory lyrics.

RATIONAL ANIMALS – "Perception Becomes Reality" EP (Feral Kid / Crotch Rot)
These guys are playing some wild, out-of-hand, brooding, Flag-esque hardcore with parts that put you in a trance and make you want to abuse yourself. A killer debut record. What the fuck will they do next?

PUNCH – "Eyeless" EP (Discos Huelga / 625 Thrash)
Again, a killer debut. This band's live power transfers very well to vinyl. High-pitched, screeching vocals that convey total fury go very well over the music—tight, stop-on-a-dime fastfastfastcore with youth crew vibes. Another record that makes me get crazy. Awesome kids, too.

RUNNING FOR COVER – "Dark Well" LP (Art of the Underground / Unholy Thrash / 625 Thrash)
This record was a long, long time coming and I think the wait was completely worth it. This band has lyrics that transcend the usual "I hate my life" bullshit that's become commonplace in the powerviolence genre; these guys mean it. Musically, this takes things up a notch by introducing some odd, disturbing instrumentals and even slightly psychedelic parts to brutal, bulldozing powerviolence.

DIVISIONS – "Vomit Hounds" EP (Human Crush)
I put this record out, so I guess it kind of sucks to put it in here, but this is simply the most aggressive, spiteful, overwhelmingly hateful hardcore out there. Justin's vocals are inhumanly venomous, and the riffs sound like they were written for someone's suicidal rampage. Metal touches are present, but never overshadow the fact that this is a hardcore record that's beating you up.

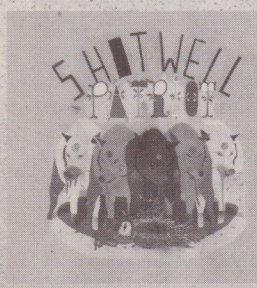
MEHKAGO N.T. – LP (SOY / Vinyl Rites / Makeshift Origami)
Once again, this is a band whose power cannot be denied. Marauding, crust-influenced hardcore riffs played with the intensity of NYHC bands of old, particularly the Cro-Mags. Seeing this band live seals the deal permanently. Gloom-laden lyrics and memorable choruses sung with anger, energy, and vitriol. This record captures the wall of hate that is this band.

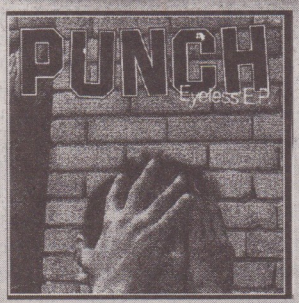
CONTROL DE ESTADO – "Ladron" EP (IFB)
This record knocked me on my ass out of nowhere. I'd always enjoyed this band's records and live sets, but this really takes things to a new level. Control De Estado added a new guitarist and started venturing into some discordant territory on here, and that always sits well with me. This band is rabidly fast, enraged, and scathingly spiteful to all political and religious powers. The manic intensity and blink-and-you-miss-it urgency is all over this record.

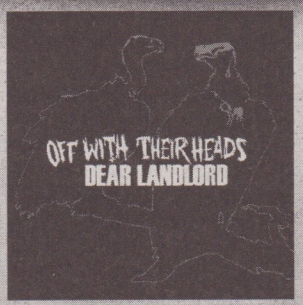
CULT RITUAL – "Guiltless" EP (Drugged Conscience)
Yeah, this band makes it twice. The recording or mixing of this record sounds blown-out, but that adds to this band's already noise-filled tunes. Both of the songs on the A-side are more tortured hardcore typical of their last record. "Electric Depression" has the catchy chorus and "Guiltless" has the power to make you want to put your head through a wall (especially the ending). The B-side closes another great record with a to-the-point, furious version of Sonic Youth's "Death Valley '69." As ever with this band, the artwork is beautiful and matches the music perfectly.

LOSER LIFE – "Burning Fields / Hard to Please" (Yellow Dog / Thrashbastard)
I don't love everything this band does, but these are two of the best songs they've ever written. I picked this up on tour in Germany and I don't know if there are a lot around in the US, but it's definitely worth tracking down. Ugly, dirty yet melodic hardcore with parts that hint at feelings of melancholy and disappointment.

WALLS – LP (Painkiller)
I guess this honestly came out in late 2007, but this is a fucking powerhouse of an album. This record treads deep into dark, dark territory. Parts remind me of the bleak terror of Swans, and other parts remind me of the ugliness and despair of later Black Flag, and still it seems completely its own and original at the same time. Lyrics keep up with songs like "Secret Rape"—"I'm sure you know someone who's raped / A secret / Your friends / Your family." Disturbing hardcore with blunt, monotone vocals that sound defeated and raging at the same time. This album achieves a feeling of a bleak past, present, and future. Well done. Apt artwork, especially the crushingly disturbing image on the lyric insert.







ANDREW UNDERWOOD

GAUZE – "Binbou Yusuri No Rizumu Ni Notte" LP (Prank)
The best hardcore punk band in the world put out an album. Of course it's on my top ten list. Yeah, the CD came out in '07. Fuck off, only LP is real?

DYSTOPIA – LP (Life Is Abuse)
Finally.

SYPHILITIC VAGINAS– LP (Rescued From Life)
Searing. Hard to believe this is a one-man band conceived by the same brain behind Ulcerrhoea and Netjajev SS.

DSB – "Kill the Phantom City" LP (Hardcore Holocaust)
I was worried that this would disappoint. Which goes to show what a dumbass I am.

LOTUS FUCKER – "Answer = Bloodwashed Noise" demo (self-released)
This demo represents everything that is good and right about hardcore punk.

QUESTION – "Insanity" 7" (Fashionable Idiots)
They're on the list partially due to the ferocity of the live show, but the record is just as vicious. Any band that can be justifiably compared to Health Hazard is all right with me.

MORNE – 2008 demo (self / vinyl on No Options)
These guys are the next big thing. The apotheosis of crust.

KRIEGSHÖG – "Hardcore Hell" 7" (Hardcore Survives / HeartFirst) & split w/ DEATHTRIBE (In Crust we Thrash)
Kriegshög is on fire. They can do no wrong.

WANKYS / EXIT HIPPIES – split LP (Detonate)
UK noise-punk traditionalists vs. Japan noise-punk Dadaists. There's something for everyone here, yet most people would probably hate it. What a strange world we live in.

STORMCROW / SKAVEN – split 7" (self-released)
The best broken-up and the best current Oakland bands on one disc? Priceless.

MARK MURRMANN

New Releases:

OOGA BOOGAS – "Romance and Adventure" LP (Aarght!)

Top of the list. Of the records that came out this year, the Ooga Boogas' LP on Aarght! has spent the most time on my turntable—and the record didn't come out until October. Sharing a guitar player with Eddy Current Suppression Ring gives the Ooga Boogas a similarly dry, deceptively simple sound. Their sense of fun comes through though in the lyrics and sometimes borderline silly tracks. Did I say silly? I mean lighthearted. Or unexpected. Whatever. The songs are varied enough to provide a little surprise on each listen. All-around awesome.

HUMAN EYE – "Fragments of the Universe Nurse" LP (Hook or Crook) & "Rare Little Creatures / Self Transforming Machine Elves" (Disordered)

I'll go ahead and list the LP, though the knockout song on the album, "Rare Little Creatures," was released as a near-perfect single on Disordered Records. Ultimate Detroit weirdo outer-space punk. And this mess of music is the real deal. If you've ever met Timmy Vulgar, you know this stuff—this music, this aesthetic—just seeps from his pores. Out-there, but grounded enough that the songs still get lodged in your head. Also, one of the best live bands.

BRAINBOMBS – "Fucking Mess" LP (Lystring)

OK, I'll admit this doesn't quite match the skin-crawling intensity of their earlier releases, even the brilliant singles released in 2007. Still, a mediocre Brainbombs release clubs most other bands' best efforts to death. Dark riffs, darker lyrics. The Brainbombs are one of those bands that, if you're having one of *those* days (or months, or years), they help you get one foot in front of the other. Fucking mess, indeed.

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING – "Primary Colours" LP (Goner)

Sure, I like the first album better, but Eddy Current knocked out a totally solid follow-up, an album that stands tall above lots of other stuff released this year. I didn't get a chance to grab any of the singles they put out this year, and would love to hear 'em (hint, hint). Hopefully they'll make it back to the States again soon.

DRUID PERFUME – LP (Pigs) & "Goat Skin Glue" EP (Italy)

Following the Soriano principle of "Of course it was a favorite, that's why I put it out!" rule, the Druid Perfume debut released by Mitch Cardwell and myself makes my top ten. Nepotistic? Sure. But the newest from three former members of the Piranhas should make at least some of you curious. More grounded than the Piranhas' controversial third album, Druid Perfume are another real deal Detroit weirdo band that doesn't just freak out for the sake of freaking out. The music sticks to your ribs. Their *Goat Skin Glue* EP was released on New Years Eve by Italy Records, so it just squeaks under the wire for 2008. The title song also appears on the LP, but the single version has completely different, brilliant instrumentation.

CATATONIC YOUTH – "Piss Scene" EP (HoZac)

OK, I'll fess up. I bought this when it came out (it was a buy-or-die HoZac release, so of course I jumped on it) and…hadn't listened to it until I was rounding up releases from 2008. Whatta ya know? It's great! I mean, this 7" has gotten its fair share of hype and that, since I'm cynical and jaded and all that, made me suspicious. I've been burned one too many times by ye old hype machine.

SWEET FACES – "On Top of That Girl" EP (Douchemaster)

I like the Fevers okay, but the nasally vocals, which some people really like, keep me from giving the records much time on my turntable. The Sweet Faces though, this 7" hit the spot! Great, current power-pop.

HEX DISPENSERS – "My Love Is a Bat / Cloak and Dagger Complication" (Alien Snatch) & "Lose My Cool" EP (Douchemaster)

Their debut LP was a favorite from 2007. The Hex Dispensers' two 7"s released in 2008 easily make my top ten. Tough, simple, great, in the best format. Looking forward to more from them in '09.

MAYYORS – "Megan's LOLZ" EP (Gomerdome)

I'm pretty sick of the impossible-to-find, pre-order, buy-or-die trend in releasing records these days. Unless you have deep pockets (or a credit card) to pay going eBay prices, the Mayyors' two singles are gone, out-of-print, impossible to find. Too bad, because these Sacto boys are pushing music into new boundaries while keeping a firm handshake. Chris Woodhouse (and his hair) on guitar are just part of the magic of this band. And while the 7"s are good, the live show is where it's at.

SHIRKS – "Dangerous" EP (Big Neck)

Sir Alec Budd, longtime Black Cat bartender, Indiana native, Problematics alum, finally makes a return to music with the Shirks. Their debut release on Big Neck snuck under the radar, being released to zero fanfare. It's a sleeper, but a great 7", virtually picking up where the Problematics left off. It's like these songs have been rattling around in Budd's head for ten years.

Reissues:

CLEAN – "Compilation" LP (Little Axe)

I'm a latecomer to this New Zealand band. And though at times they tend more to the indie side of the spectrum than my taste often runs, the Clean absolutely hit the right spot. My understanding is that this LP is more or less a best-of type thing, collecting their finest moments from the early/mid-'80s. And like all well put together best-of compilations, I'm left wanting more.

EASYBEATS – "Easy" LP, "It's 2 Easy" LP, "Vol. 3" LP, "Vigil" LP (Downunder)

A whole slew of classy repo reissues of the Easybeats LPs! What's not to love about these? OK, the price. They're expensive. But they're excellently done, nice packaging, great sound quality. If you're a fan, they're must-haves. All are limited to 500, so if you haven't gotten on these yet, and have the dough to spend, you better get on it.

KNOTS – "Heartbreaker / Action" (1977)

1977 Records from Japan continues releasing incredible reissues of some of the best, but not necessarily most hyped *KBD* ragers and power-pop gems, like this one.

CHANTS R&B – LP (Norton)

Crazed New Zealand '60s garage, fueled by a strong love of the Pretty Things. What's not to love about Chants R&B?? The live LP that came out a few years ago was good, but this, complete with a full side of studio cuts, is outright killer. Plus, you get the as-always extensive Norton liner notes lowdown.

NIXE – 2xLP (Polly Maggoo)

I've said it before, I'll say it again—any reissue Jeroen Vedder puts together, I'll buy. A Dutchman with impeccable taste and a deep knowledge of his country's punk history, Vedder helped compile this deluxe reissue of Netherland's first all-girl punk band. Gatefold sleeve with lotsa liner notes and photos.

MILK & COOKIES – 2xLP (Radio Heartbeat)

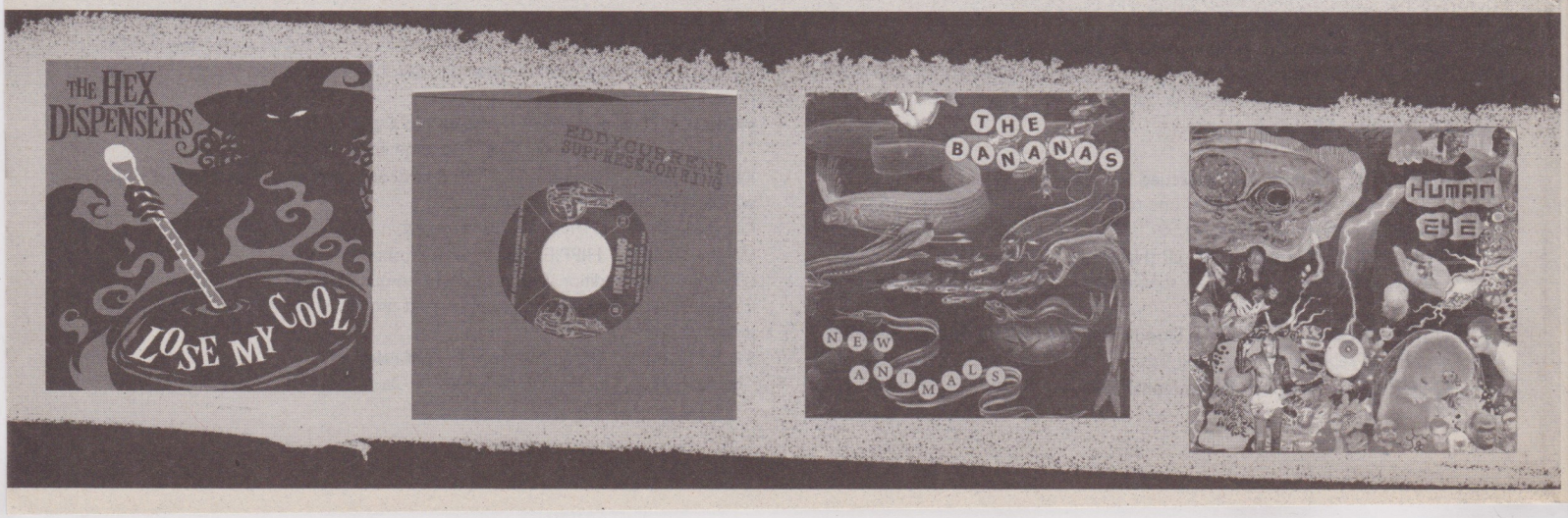
Totally fey power-pop, in the "is that a guy or girl singing?" vein. Another dee-lux packaging job, this time care of Radio Heartbeat. It gets the gatefold, double-album treatment.

V/A – "AK-79" 2xLP (Ripper / Velvet Tiger)

One of the best punk comps turned 30 this year, so New Zealand punks threw a party. The reunion show was accompanied by reissues of the Scavengers LP, a Proud Scum 7" and this, a 2xLP version of the *AK-79* comp. *Fuuuuuuck*. It's about time! The extended CD is nice, but to have all that on vinyl, with nice, big art, photos, liner notes, the works. Since you missed the reunion show, you owe it to yourself to track one of these down.

Live:

HUMAN EYE / MAYYORS at Budget Rock



DIONNE STEVENS

1. LORDS OF LIGHT – "Electric Sun" 12" (Studio Georgie) and live at Squid & Ink
Some folks can't get into the hippy vibe of the Lords' music (not all, just some). I however am a total fan of it all, save for their foray into the blues—ouch. By the way, *The Dividing Up* EP of '07 was unfairly cast out, completely misunderstood, and will go down in my world forever as a classic.

2. THE ENDLESS BLOCKADE – "Primitive" LP (20 Buck Spin)
I listen to this so much. It's funny too, because the split with Hatred Surge barely even got flipped to their side.

3. DYSTOPIA – LP (Life Is Abuse)
I had reserved expectations when told that there was a new album coming out—considering how significant the LPs of yon have been to me, and how much time has elapsed. There is only one Dystopia and they fucking did it again. I probably put "My Meds Aren't Working" on like three different mix tapes this year! …Not disappointed by this release at all.

4. INVASIÓN – "La Caza" 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
This is one of those unique bands that I feel lucky to have been exposed to. Totally rad, with a sound that scares me slightly... I nearly missed them in Texas, but didn't. Faded slowly to black and missed everything that happened after they played though, well pretty much…

5. SEX/VID "Communal Living" 12" (Dom America) and 4th of July show at Layla's backyard
A long time ago, in a record store far away, I saw one of those descriptive labels on a Damad record that read, "It's fucking Damad, duh." Now replace the band on that tag with Sex/Vid and one could easily appropriate the same sentiment. Everyone seems to love this shit, and I guess I fall right into line with the herd. This record has all those rippers they played on tour last summer. I like those songs, especially "Footsteps," and think that is a practical way to present a new album. As you have heard, Sex/Vid may not need any more approval. They are the current big thing, and deserve to be recognized, although surges in popularity can be damaging. I hope they remain unaffected.

6. IRON LUNG / HATRED SURGE – "Broken" EP (Iron Lung) and live at Emo's (Chaos in Tejas)
I love the 'Lung and was duly impressed by the collaboration. Even if we weren't already homies, I would totally track these dudes down, invite them on a picnic, and force them to sing to me after feeding them tiny vegan cakes made with breast milk.

7. WALLS – LP (Painkiller)
Certain records should only be played after dark. This is one of them.

8. BILLY BAO – "Accumulation" EP (Xerox Music)
The last song on the first side of *Dialectics of Shit* LP almost sneaks it into the top pick slot, but the skip track is too hard on my nerves. Conceptually, the EP is a much tighter fit anyway. I love the angry clattering pile of broken shit it becomes.

9. BRAIN HANDLE – "Smiling/Smiling Again" (Iron Lung)
I put on their records when I do my most hated chores—like washing dishes, or when I have to go to work—but feel uninspired. My mood changes instantly. These dudes are also a smart and fun addition to the current columns lineup and my fondness has bloomed thusly. Quite talented in the song-making department, and so good live! I want to die wearing flannel (and blue eyeliner).

10. TOTAL CONTROL – "Stareway" EP (Aarght!)
I don't exactly hear the Tubeway Army in there, but this record is enough of a killer to defeat those wussies in any battle.

… aside from all this gruff stuff I also listened to loads of Roxy Music, King Crimson, and ELO in 2008, but that mostly came out the year I was born. And I would also like to add that seeing the Butthole Surfers live on December 30th (followed by Sex/Vid) was definitely a highlight. Say what you will about them being hippies. I loved it!

WILL KINSER

This is in no way a complete list for 2008, rather a list of the ten EP's and ten LP's that I think people should check out from this year. It is impossible for me to listen to everything to narrow down to just ten records. I also want to mention that DISFEAR – "Live The Storm" LP would be on this list had it not been released by Relapse.

Ten LPs:

SKITKIDS – "Besoket Vid Krubban" LP (Room 101)
Skitkids are hands-down the best punk band playing these days. *Besoket Vid Krubban* picks up right where their first 12", *Onna for Pleasure*, left off. Same Swedish hardcore mixed with rock 'n' roll leads and played in the manic style of bands like Deathside and Judgement as before. The lyrics are class-conscious, scene-conscious, deadly spot-on observations of the world. Their music will make you want to break glass and roll in it.

THE ESTRANGED – "Static Thoughts" LP (Black Water / Dirtnap / Dead Ideas)
At first listen I sort of thought that the Estranged where just another band copying the Wipers. That was only until I gave them a third and fourth listen. Then I realized that they are much more than that. The Estranged have a great old punk style but technically they are at the forefront of the new wave of punk. Mark's guitar playing is phenomenal; just watching him play some of the intricate chords and progressions will leave you with little doubt that he is not merely a replicator of the past. He is an explorer taking new paths. The rhythm section is solid as iron as well. Every record they have put out this year has blown me away.

HJERTESTOP – "Vi Ses I Helvede" LP (Hjertespind)
This LP was one of the most anticipated records in years and it doesn't disappoint in the least. Hjertestop plays a crazy hybrid of early Danish punk like the Lost Kids or Electric Deads mixed with a distinctly more '80s LA punk sound. The lyrics are caustic and totally direct. If you can't relate to "Doomsday Oh Yeah" you have been living under a rock. This record rages all the way through. Celebrate the end of the world.

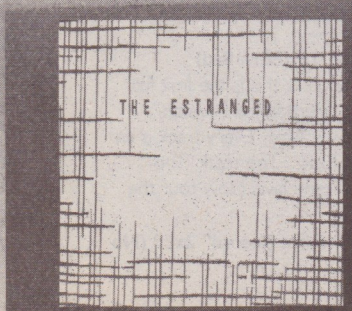
DEVOUR – LP (Sorry State)
This band plays dark hardcore with tons of intensity and heart. Their sound is complex and totally raging. This record has the total package—great music, great recording, and great art.

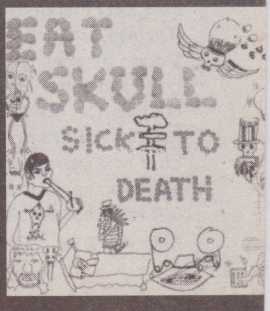
PISSCHRIST – "Victims of Faith" LP (Yellow Dog)
Australia's hardcore outfit Pisschrist has done a mighty job of perfecting a catchy yet chaotic noisy wrecking machine of sound. *Victim of Faith* is the culmination of their development and their prowess as a band. This record will appeal to a lot of different punk sensibilities. Absolutely great.

GAUZE – "Binbou Yusuri No Rizumu Ni Notte" LP (Prank)
Gauze fifth album. Still fast and furious and everything you want from a timeless punk band. This record picks up the pace and shows you that even after 25 years they can still write great songs with fury and precision.

MORNE – "Demo" LP (No Options)
This record mixes all the best elements of Amebix with more current dark and heavy sounds. The recording was done as a demo and runs nearly 40 minutes. The music on this is so epic and well executed that it sounds like a band that has been together easily ten years. The lyrics on this stray away from the current formula of fantasy topics and actually tackle subjects that are important and relevant.

THE ASSASSINATORS – "Sigt Efter Hjertet" LP (Alerta Antifacista)
The new LP by the Assassinators from Copenhagen





was very highly anticipated release this year. For those who do not already know this band, they use elements of classic punk from the '70s, pop punk, and even great modern crust to create a sound that is progressive and focused. This LP is a worthy listen and will excite those of you looking for something different.

MEANWHILE – "Reality Or Nothing" LP (Feral Ward)
When I feel like I want to smash the shit out of everything and everyone around me, Meanwhile is in my preferred playlist. *Reality or Nothing*, like all of their previous records, is the most devastating Swedish D-beat imaginable. A full noise assault.

MASSHYSTERI – "Var Del Av Stan" LP (Feral Ward)
I'm not gonna lie. This record is a direct copy of Lost Kids' *Cola Freaks* EP, but who the fuck cares? Lost Kids were a short-lived band and any attempt to continue their sound is welcome in my opinion. Whether or not they are replicators or originators, Masshysteri are really good at what they do.

Ten 7"s:

ESTRANGED – "Entranced / Vilified" (Dead Ideas), "Sacred Decay / Through the Night" (Green Noise), "Fast Train / The Masses" (Black Water)
See above.

FIX MY HEAD – "Empty Slogans" EP (No Options) & "Garbage Existence" EP (Vinyl Addict)
Both of these records are very straightforward hardcore, but somehow Fix My Head manage to tap the manic riffage of classics like Black Flag and Jerry's Kids without sounding like a copy. Both of these are modern classics and should be in any self-respecting punk's collection.

LOS MONJO – "Cobardes" EP (No Options) & "Cerdos" EP (Todo Destruido)
Los Monjo in the style of Spanish bands Eskorbuto and La Uvi plays rock 'n' roll fueled punk that has qualities of the Ramones and the Stooges. Los Monjo still sounds fresh while slamming through catchy raw songs. This is the kind of music that stays with you for days. A great band out of Guadelajara, Mexico.

GASMASK TERRÖR – "Architects of Death" EP (Flowers of Carnage)
This is just a bulldozer of a record. Scandinavian-style hardcore at its most relentless, and dark. The soundtrack to the end of existence.

N.N. – "Buitres" EP (self-released)
This is really catchy punk fronted by Martin of Los Crudos, but don't expect this to sound like his other bands. N.N. plays straight-up punk rock without many hardcore elements. Martin's voice is the perfect compliment to their style. I think to date this is my favorite band he has been in.

PIERCED ARROWS – "In My Brain / Caroline" (Tombstone)
This record features "Caroline," a beautiful song that has a great melody. Pierced Arrows have a lot of soul and with a very minimalist approach seem to tap it perfectly. I always enjoy them live and all their records are great.

Honorable Mentions:

INVASIÓN – "La Caza" 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
WORLD BURNS TO DEATH – "The Graveyard of Utopia" LP (Prank)
SYPHILITIC VAGINAS – "Black Motor Covenant" EP (Rescued From Life)
SPECTRES – "Visions of a New World" EP (Whisper in Darkness)

Best Live Bands of 2008:

AT THE GATES in San Francisco, CA
FY FAN in Berkeley, CA
SEVERED HEAD OF STATE in Melbourne, Australia
PISSCHRIST in Hobart, Tasmania
HARD SKIN in Austin, TX
N.N. in San Francisco, CA
THE ESTRANGED in Santa Cruz, CA
DEATHCHARGE in Portland, OR
LEATHERFACE in Austin, TX
RED DONS in Richmond, CA

TIM BROOKS

The past couple of years there were less great records being made. This year has been the best I can remember. I have bought more really good new records this year than I have for a very long time. The hardcore scene left me a little cold (although the East Coast No Way/Grave Mistake crew kept the banner flying). It seems that songwriting and hooks have made a comeback which is fine by me. I have decided against a top ten and have instead decided on a bakers dozen… in no order…

MARKED MEN – "Fortune / Like Robots" (Dirtnap)
Dougie summed this record up in his review. The best band in the world. Bold statement, I know—but true. This disc is a taster for their final full-length (which I was lucky enough to hear in advance; it will be in next years Top Ten…trust me, it's fantastic!!). This band has just blown my mind. Amazing on the first listen, but as you listen more, their songs just grow and grow. I have been lucky enough to see them live a bunch and they blow the doors off every time. If my taste in music were to be summed up by one song, it would be something by the Marked Men.

AIRFIX KITS – Demo
Are we allowed demos?? Fuck it, it's in. I probably listened to this more than anything else in '08. They are good mates, but that wouldn't be enough—I could just pretend to like 'em. But this? Mind-blowing. I liked the Giant Haystacks well enough, but Allan and Alan have really refined the sound, tightened everything up, and created this monster. The sound of a Glasgow council estate—short sharp jabs and two black eyes, all delivered with a smile. Imagine the Mekons, Gang of Four, and the Fall but with a Scots accent. Can't wait for the records (they'll be in next years' too). Nice one.

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING – "Primary Colors" LP (Goner)
I ignored the hype machine when Eddy Current Suppression Ring came through town and missed them. Boo, more fool me. This LP really sums up how I feel about a lot of the record from '08—taking from the past but adding something fresh and new. My love for Aussie music is no secret and these boys have taken the sneer of Aussie murder-punk like Razar, News, etc. but layered it with everything from the hypnosis of Velvet Underground to the bleakness of Mark E. Smith and the Fall. On each listen, this LP unravels more and more and every time I try and throw on another disc, I keep hitting repeat. It's so refreshing to see stuff coming out in '08 that equally matches any record from the past 30 years.

FRUSTRATION – "Relax" LP (Born Bad)
After a couple of fantastic 12"s, this is the first full-lengther by these French wierdos. Joy Division meets Crisis meets Tubeway Army. Every track is an absolute banger. Dark as fuck… The track "Too Many Questions" is an all-time fave. Now tour the US.

VIOLENT ARREST – "Criminal Record" 2xEP (No

Way / Grave Mistake)
I think this is the third year in a row this lot have made it in. Three-quarters of Ripcord deliver SS Decontrol-style jabs to the head and neck. Shows you don't have to be a youngster to deliver the goods… Fave hardcore relaease of last year by far.

GENTLEMAN JESSE – LP (Douchemaster)
Maybe not as immediate as the 7", but this is class. Totally authentic power-pop busting with hooks. What makes this record special is the attention to detail in the recording—you could put this up gainst any record from '79 and you'd swear it was from the same era. Listened to this one a lot. While I'm here, I may well give some props to the other Douchmaster records that almost made it to the top spot: Buzzer and the Perfect Fits.

SKIN LIKE IRON – 10" (self-released)
I love this…easily one of my fave local bands. Saw them dismantle a bar with their super heavy 'core. They stand apart from a lot of hardcore around today 'cos they aren't just rehashing the same old shit. Imagine a super heavy, crushing early COC or something. Check 'em live, then get the discs. Epic.

OOGA BOOGAS – "Romance and Adventure" LP (Aarght!)
Another Aussie record, with one of the members of Eddy Current Suppression Ring. I mean, the name *suuuuucks*, but the record? Fuck. Amazing. Maybe even better than the ECSR. It has a similar vibe, but way more out-there. It's kinda a mix of solid Aussie rockin' like the Onyas, but then blown-out Fall-esque weirness. This record has seen a ton of time on the table…

STATUES – "Same Bodies, Same Faces" EP (Deranged)
I picked one of the three EPs by these Canucks, thought it could have been any one of them—super catchy power-pop/punk, kinda like the Tranzmitors… or the Buzzcocks. I dig all their shit; can't wait for the next LP.

ESTRANGED – "Fast Train / The Masses" (Black Water)
Again, I like all of this band's gear, but this 7" is just perfect. Dark, driving Wipers-style punk from the Northwest. It also has elements of New Model Army, Killing Joke, and the Cult, which is fine by me….

DEFEKTORS – "Secret Trials" EP (Nominal)
You don't hear too much about this band, but they are kinda Canada's answer to the Estranged—with an early Dangerhouse vibe. I heard them first on a comp LP and was blown away. Both singles they did last year are fantastic. I'm sure we will hear more from this lot in '09.

TOTAL CONTROL – "Stareway" EP (Aarght!)
I have a feeling this disc may fly under some people's radar, but it's still available—so get it. Yet another Aussie disc with connections to Eddy Current Suppression Ring, Straightjacket Nation, and the now-defunct Soviet Valves. This EP is the shit, like a more cohesive Jay Reatard with a hardcore bent, or late '80s UK indie blown to smithereens… I likey.

NODZZZ – LP (What's Your Rupture)
I reviewed this, so check two months back to get the scoop… This LP sums up the less-is-more theory. Two guitars, drums, and out-of-tune vocals. It's simple, but totally arresting. I think this band (along with labelmates Love Is All) really spans the width of the scene, from tweaked-out garage nerds to highwater-pants folk rockers and everyone in between. Good shit.

BRIAN DOOLEY

MARKED MEN – first LP reissue (Dirtnap)
I am so glad Dirtnap reissued this record. I knew that the Marked Men had three full-lengths and I already had the other two. Nobody I knew had a copy of the original by the time it was reissued, so these were basically all new songs for me. I got their *Fix My Brain* LP first, and having constantly played it, went out looking for the other ones. It took me a while to find the second LP, but when I did, it quickly took over as my favorite Marked Men record. When I saw this for sale at their merch table at a show, I was super excited to finally get to hear these songs and wasn't let down in the slightest. This now hails as my favorite Marked Men LP.

DEAR LANDLORD / OFF WITH THEIR HEADS – split EP (No Idea)
I was really bummed when Rivethead broke up a few years ago. They were arguably the best band in Minneapolis at the time. Their shows at the Alamo were always a fuckin' blast. How can you go wrong with a giant cooler of champipple, all your friends, and super catchy, fist-pumping, sing-along pop punk? Dear Landlord is made-up of members from Rivethead and the Copyrights and is very noticeably similar to those bands, so there is really no way you shouldn't love this. Off With Their Heads pretty much picked up right where Rivethead left off, even sharing a couple members at times. They are definitely one of my favorite bands of the last five years. Off With Their Heads seems to get better with every split and/or EP they release, this just happens to be my favorite from the past year.

GAUZE – "Binbou Yusuri No Rizumu Ni Notte" LP (Prank)
Japanese hardcore pioneers Gauze hadn't put out a record since 1996 or '97 when this came out. Anybody into Japanese hardcore already knows Gauze and without having heard it should already know that it's going to rip. When a band has been around as long as I have been alive and still manages to write such rippingly brutal hardcore songs as the ones found here, you know they've got it down and aren't going to stray anytime soon. I'll admit, I haven't been digging a lot of newer Japanese hardcore bands, but let's face it—Gauze will always deliver, no matter how long they stick with us.

SKIN LIKE IRON – 10" (self-released)
I first heard of these guys when they played a show with Young Offenders and The Potential Johns. It was an awesome show with three pretty dissimilar bands. Skin Like Iron played first and really surprised me. They had lots of energy and a really tight but heavy sound. This record is the first recording I heard by these guys and it didn't disappoint. Nice heavy grooves with a stoner edge to them make this a great record to jam out to. My only gripe is that the songs could stand to be a bit longer, but that's not enough to sway my opinion of this release.

DILLINGER FOUR – "More Songs About Girlfriends and Bubblegum" EP (Mutant Pop)
YES! My favorite D4 record ever finally got repressed! I was really happy to get to review this a few months ago. The four songs on this disc stand out to me so much more than almost any others D4 has written since. For a lot of people, this EP marks somewhat of a turning point in the band's history. At the time this was originally released, they were still playing basement shows almost every weekend. Soon after this came out, their *Midwestern Songs for the Americas* LP was put out by Hopeless Records, and eventually they had to stop playing basements (or at lest use a fake name on fliers if they were going to be playing). I don't really know where I'm going with this, but just trust that this record delivers some of the finest Midwest punk rock out there. The only thing they could have done would be to include the two songs from the *No Slow, All Go* compilation so as to have the whole catalogue readily available on vinyl again.

SCREAMING FEMALES – "What if Someone Is Watching Their TV?" CD (self-released)
I'm blatantly cheating by putting this one in my top ten. It came out, like, a year and a half ago, so it's by no means new or recent, but I am just now getting into this band, so it seems appropriate. Besides, isn't

it punk to cheat the system? If you haven't already heard this band, I can't recommend anything else that to listen to this album. It's hard to describe the sound they have. When I first heard this, I had no idea who it was or how I felt about it. It definitely took some getting used to. I haven't heard anybody make this comparison yet, but to me it sounds like old Nintendo music played by punk kids. The band members are really good at writing parts that compliment each other without mimicking sounds. And the vocals—holy shit, the vocals! This girl Marissa wails like no other and has an equally appealing singing voice. I don't think there's any good way to describe what's going on here, so you'll just have to see for yourself how awesome Screaming Females are.

THE BANANAS – "New Animals" LP (Recess)
The Bananas should need no introduction at this point. Over the last year or so, Recess Records reissued this band's three previous full-lengths on vinyl, providing anybody with enough opportunities to explore almost the entire body of work from this Sacramento trio. After seeing this band about half a dozen times since moved here a couple years ago, I was fairly familiar with many of these songs by the time this was available. I love listening to a new record and hearing all these songs that I kind of know, but not enough to say I really know them. This record was exactly that for me—a chance to really get to listen to the songs and know them. To me, all of the four full-lengths this band has put out are equally as good for their own reasons, and I wouldn't be able to tell you which one I like the most.

THE ESTRANGED – "Static Thoughts" LP (Dirtnap)
One of my friends was bugging me constantly to check out this Portland band for the longest time. I kept meaning to give them a listen and kept forgetting. Eventually I got their "Sacred Decay / Through the Night" single and thought it was pretty good, but I didn't really like the vocals. After listening to it enough, I got over my hang-up with the vocals and decided to check out this LP. Holy hell, this is really good. Usually when a band gets hyped up as much as these guys had been, I tend to cautiously shy away from it, but this is one band I'm really glad I gave a fair chance to. The Estranged are one of the only bands that can pull off the Wipers' style of dark gloomy music and have it still sound sincere.

As with many new records these days, this LP comes with a free mp3 download which is always a nice little bonus.

THE HOLY GHOSTRIDERS – "Fast Track Heart Attack" LP (Learning Curve)
This took too damn long to come out. I had been waiting for this since they made a demo CDR a few years ago. This new album has all the songs found on said demo, plus eight new ones that are just as good if not better. Comprised of ex-members of Holding On and Martyr AD and an occasional member of Off With Their Heads, The Holy Ghostriders play some rockin' hardcore that brings to mind *Feel the Darkness*-era Poison Idea. Not long ago, I read a review of this where the listener compared these guys to Dillinger Four, but that assessment couldn't be further away from the truth. If you live in the Midwest, you've probably heard or seen these dudes live, but they haven't made it out of that corner of the world as far as I know. So yeah, I know you guys will see this and hope you take me seriously when I tell you that you need to come out and do some West Coast shows sooner than later. Thank you, that is all.

YOSEF

Full-Length Records:

ANCHOR – "The Quiet Dance" LP (Refuse)
If Chokehold and Refused had a secret love child, it would be Sweden's Anchor. The best vegan straight edge record in years. Essential.

BURIAL YEAR / ZANN – split LP (Adagio830)
Absolutely crushing Bay Area metallic hardcore meets Germany's heaviest politicized screamo.

CURSED – "III: Architects of Troubled Sleep" LP (Goodfellow)
Canada's best hardcore band called it quits this year, but not before releasing their best work to date.

DEATHSPELL OMEGA / S.V.E.S.T – "Veritas Diaboli Manet in Aeternum" (Norma Evangelium Diaboli/End All Life Productions)
Theistic Satanists performing audio rituals against Christ. Essential.

FALL OF EFRAFA – "Elil" 2xLP (Symphony of Destruction / Behind the Scenes / Alerta Antifascista / Fight for Your Mind / Sound Devastation / Deskontento / Be Part / Halo of Flies)
Epic crust has never been so good: beautiful, stirring, and devastating in equal parts.

LEVIATHAN – "Massive Conspiracy Against All Life" 2xLP (Moribund)
Complex black metal, challenging and ultimately rewarding on so many levels; a true work of art.

REVENGE – "Infiltration.Downfall.Death" LP (Nuclear War Now)
Chaotic war-metal from Satanic Skinhead Superion Elitists. No, they're not Nazis.

THE SEPARATION / RESTRAINED – split LP (Glory Kid)
Redding's answer to the mighty Catharsis sharing a slab of vinyl with raging SoCal political hardcore.

SURRENDER – "Paper Thrones" LP (Thrillhouse)
The best Crass Records release in years.

THOU – "Peasant" LP (Level Plane)
Doom out of New Orleans? You'd better fucking believe it. Dystopia meets Thergothon at a hardcore show.

Less-Than-Full-Length Records:

DIE YOUNG – "Loss" EP (A389 Recordings)
Texas' best anarchist hardcore band. No, really. Like Trial meets Catharsis.

EXTORTION / AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE – split EP (Deep Six)
Australia's powerviolence and grind masters team up to destroy your eardrums.

GEHENNA – "Lands of Sodom" EP (Hit the Deck)
The Legion of the Seven Crowns returns to show us just how evil and fucked up hardcore is supposed to be.

IN DISGUST – "Reality Choke" 10" (16Oh)
West Coast Grind Violence. Pure hateful anti-music. My favorite local band.

MIND ERASER – "Conscious Unconscious" 12" (Clean Plate)
Two *looooong* ones from a band more known for short songs. Still heavy, still brutal, still totally fucking amazing.

MOLOCH – 10" (Feast of Tentacles /)
Bitter, hateful doom/sludge from the UK. One of the best new bands of the year.

NARROWS – EP (Deathwish Inc.)
Members of Botch, Unbroken and These Arms Are Snakes playing what could be a lost Botch record. Do I need to say anything else?

PUNCH – "Eyeless" EP (Discos Huelga / 625 Thrash)
Bay area vegan thrash attack, now with 50% more mosh parts.

ROT IN HELL / HORDES – split EP (Rat Patrol)
Respectively, Integrity- and Entombed-inspired Holy Terror hardcore from the UK. Fucking awesome.

SKIN LIKE IRON – 10" (self-released)
Maybe the best hardcore band in the Bay Area. Fucked Up plus Cro-Mags plus Integrity minus anything boring or shitty equals Skin Like Iron.

Demos:

DEEPEN THE WOUND – Tape
Reno vegan straight edge anarchist crew, with folks from Bafabegiya, Dog Assassin, and XCrucial AttackX. Expect to hear more from them soon.

DRUG SHIT – "You Hate Us—We Don't Care" Tape (Better Youth Underground)
Intelligent, pissed off straight edge hardcore from Utah. No metal, no mosh parts, just circle pits, sing-alongs and attitude.

FELL VOICES – Tape (Featherspine)
Depressive epic black metal from the forests of Santa Cruz. Bleak and evil. Amazing demo, great things to come.

FOREIGN NATURE – Tape
Heavy-as-hell hardcore from the Bay Area, with members of all those bands you loved a few years ago.

MARROW – CDR
Greyskull and Owen Hart members playing fucked-up, emotive metallic hardcore the way only kids from Tacoma can.

MÜNN 0))) – "Selbstmortwald Rehearsal 2/27/08" (Woodsmoke)
Members of Ancestortooth, Leech, and Mania playing intense drone/doom. Hopefully they'll have some new material this year.

NECRITE – "Bereft of Hope" CDR
Two long tacks of cold, ambient black metal straight from the abyss of San Jose. "No limits. No compromises. We stand for the total annihilation of humanity and bring with us a monolith of darkness."

xREFLECTx – CDR
Salt Lake City straight edge in the vein of 108 or Mean Season. There's something really inspiring about a bunch of 17-year-olds playing music like this, especially when they play it so well.

SHEEEP – CDR
The best thrashcore/stoner rock band you've never heard. Straight outta Burbank.

STREETWALKERS – Tape
A lot of bands are trying to play '80s hardcore these days, but only a few succeed at writing great songs that sound original and make you want to go nuts. Streetwalkers, from the Bay Area, are one of those few.

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

Another year, another billion or so punk records to be relegated to the scrap heaps of fading history, with an exceptional few cutting through all the garbage…

My customary top eleven, in no order except for number one:

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING – "Demon's Demands / I'm Guilty" (Iron Lung)
Don't get me wrong—the LP is good. But this little single fucking *kills* me. The riff on "Demon's Demands" has been under my skin/in my skull for months—I don't know how it's possible that a rock 'n' roll song this good had gone so long without being written. Sentences are failing me, so I'll just throw out a few adjectives to describe it: sick, dirty, feverish, dizzying, and on and on…

SILLA ELÉCTRICA – "Cloaca" EP (Solo Para Punks)
Brilliant hardcore punk made by some Madrileños with *perfect* guitar riffs and timeless angry/catchy vocals not far from the tradition ushered in at the dawn of (punk) time by countrymates Vulpess. And you know what? I like the vocals on this record . even better than those old-timers! Sacrilege, you say? Well, I say this one is a lifer, kids—I will still be listening to it in 50 years to celebrate the moment after I put my walker through a cop's teeth…

PIERCED ARROWS – "Straight to the Heart" LP (Tombstone)
Reading what Toody had to say in the Pierced Arrows interview for *MRR* made me a feel a little less afraid of growing old. Listening to this LP—as good as the last (and best) Dead Moon LP—made me *look forward* to it. Classic.

LIMP WRIST – one-sided 12" (self-released)
Who knew that Limp Wrist would put out their best record nearly ten years after the whole Y2K thrash explosion? But here I am, listening to the best material by these still-dreamy hardcore boys, swooning mid-pogo. The songs completely explode off the vinyl, reminding me of a post-millennial update on the insanity of the first Impact 12". No shit.

KRIEGSHÖG – "Hardcore Hell" EP (HeartFirst)
AUUURRGGGHH!!!!! This record is sick, sick, *sick*. I had to wait for an attainable version, since the Japanese press sold out faster than Martin can find a date in a laundromat, but it was worth the wait. Vicious, unheard of sounds make this record seem like it's from another fucking planet. Best hardcore EP in years!?!

XYX – "Sistema de Terminación Sexual" EP (S-S)
Mexican girl/boy hot/cold (post) punk with the best band name in a minute. This record mysteriously showed up in my mail because a good friend heard it and thought I would not be able to live without it. A very good friend indeed!

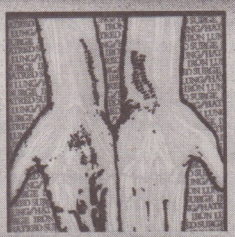
SEX/VID – "Nests" EP (Dom America)
Another year, another otherworldly Sex/Vid EP (that, yes, I like better than their long-player). You are all sick of hearing us intone about this band, but then again, "Always Home" speaks for itself. So just put it on, sit up close to your speakers, and rise above.

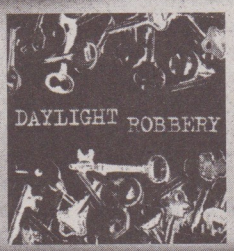
SLOWMOTIONS – "Mystery Action / Dance" (H:G Fact)
Sending away for this record was the punk rock equivalent of ordering a milkshake. There was no way this could be anything other than delicious. And it is; infectious day-glo punk rock with an A-side as good as anything you will find.

DAYLIGHT ROBBERY – "Washtenaw" EP (Residue)
Another underappreciated record from the best punk scene in the United States, a.k.a. Chicago. This falls squarely in the tradition of X (LA) and Gorilla Angreb. Daylight Robbery is not *exactly* like those bands—who could be?—but is in *conversation* with 'em, if you know what I mean. Being cynical, I didn't think this record would hit me quite the way it did, but I couldn't argue with how totally memorable these songs are.

N.N. – "Buitres" EP (self-released)
I feel almost bad putting two Martin-fronted records on my list, lest anyone think we only congratulate our own around here. But what can I say? Screaming punk intros giving way to Eskorbuto-styled jams will always make any list of mine unless I turn normal: not fucking likely.

NODZZZ – 12" (What's Your Rupture?)
The first time I saw these boys was on a dirty old bus in Oakland. Nodzzz was a pleasure that night, and I remember thinking to myself, "I wonder if anyone else will ever like this band?" Over the next few months, I thought about them as my little secret. Well, the secret is out, and geek-pop is in. Can't wait for the tour!





ANDREW MURPHY

1. Common Eider, King Eider – "Figs, Wasps, & Monotremes" CD (Root Strata)
Hands down my favorite record of the year. It sounds especially nice this week walking in the rain under an umbrella with the cold air against my face. It's a beautiful record, both sparse and harsh. Bright and dark.

2. Lebenden Toten – "Near Dark" LP (Feral Ward)
I like the intensity of this record as well as the feedback underneath the rest of the racket.

3. Private Entertainment – "Four Tracks by Private Entertainment" EP (White Denim)
One of my favorite singles that I reviewed this year. Russian duo making cool minimal-wave industrial dance stuff.

4. Dead Luke – "I Want You / Waste of Spaces" & "Jumping Jack Flash Drive / Not Tonight" (Sacred Bones)
Dead Luke released one of my other favorite singles I reviewed. Slower and more sparse than Private Entertainment but similar sounds. Both singles are badass.

5. Titmachine – "I Wanna Be Your Dog / Schneller" (Meeuw Muzak)
This is a cool new band from the Netherlands. Even though I'm sick of hearing Stooges covers, Titmachine somehow managed to make me want to hear one over and over.

6. A.H. Kraken – LP (In the Red)
My memory is spotty but I remember this being one of my favorite LPs that I reviewed this year. Noisy punk stuff from France.

7. Slim Cessna's Auto Club – "Cipher" CD/LP (Alternative Tentacles)
This band formed in 1993 as a country group in Denver and now they are noisy, weird, and unclassifiable. Aside from their country debut, this is my favorite record by the group. They put on one of the best live performances in the USA.

8. Bum Kon Drunken Sex Sucks CD/LP (MRR / Smooch)
Bum Kon broke up 20 years before I moved to Denver but one of the things I really enjoy when listening to this is that it sounds like any of my other friends' bands from Denver that never received any recognition—just a generation or so before the Denver scene I knew. I realize that won't make anyone reading this want to rush and give this a listen so I'll add it's pretty great, too.

9. V/A – Local Anesthetic CD (Smooch)
My little label released this record but I'm not trying to plug my own shit. I think this compilation is great. I loved most of the singles included on it for almost a decade and always hoped they would get their due. It's eleven mostly unknown 7" singles from Denver ('77-'83) compiled onto one CD.

10. THE GET OFFS – "Airplane Fight! / Drunk" (Pearson / Meggitt Music)
Catchy, sloppy rock from one of my local favorites.

JESSE LUCSIOUS

Top fifteen releases that would get covered in MRR, *in no particular order.*

ASHTRAY – "The Power of Positive Drinking" CD (Silver Sprocket)
Santa Rosa punx write better songs than before with right-on lyrics that hit hard and rock at the same time. A buddy gave me a copy of their first 7" saying, "Listen to how badly they copy Blatz!" Thankfully for all of us, there's no way you can say they're being cookie-cutter here as they are clearly (finally?) comfortable writing Ashtray songs by, for, and about the punx!

THROWRAG – "Second Place" CD (Acetate)
Why is this band so criminally underappreciated? They've been putting out twisted takes on punk and rock for years; I'm convinced their Salton Sea background has helped them salt the musical wounds that are their records (sorry, couldn't resist). Abrasive, catchy, undeniably talented, Throwrag should be the biggest underground band since the New Bomb Turks or Dillinger Four—the fact that they're not proves that people ain't no good.

SUBHUMANS – "Death Was Too Kind" LP (Alternative Tentacles)
Ever since I heard "Slave To My Dick" on *Let Them Eat Jellybeans*, the Canadian Subhumans have been one of my favorite punk bands of all time. This reissue of long out-of-print vinyl shows why. It includes the great 12" with "Fuck You" (later covered by DOA and that metal band) and a different version of "Slave To My Dick." This would be in my top ten no matter what label released it (I work at Alternative Tentacles).

SLOPPY SECONDS – "Endless Bummer" CD (Kid Tested)
Not since *Destroyed* has Sloppy Seconds come anywhere near one of my year-end Best Of lists. This time around they packed the whole record full of hits, just like they did with *Destroyed* two decades ago. The truly unfortunate "Show us your tits" song aside, the lyrics are as clever/biting as ever. It's great news for lovers of juvenile pop punk who can handle a lot of punk with their pop.

PAINT IT BLACK – "New Lexicon" LP (Jade Tree)
A friggin' monster of a loud fast punk/HC record. *New Lexicon* has enough breakdowns to satisfy the pit thug in you and enough clever, intelligent lyrics to satisfy the emo nerd in you. The balancing act these guys have always achieved is finely tuned here—this is their best record yet!

DEAD TO ME – "Little Brother" LP/CD (Fat Wreck)
This EP from Frisco's finest melodic tattoo punks shows that A.) They've still got "it" from *Cuban Ballerina*, and B.) We're in for an excellent full-length from them in 2009.

BETTER BEATLES – "Mercy Beat" LP (Hook or Crook)
Two of these twisted, Devo-ish takes on the Beatles made it onto a rare 7" when it was recorded in 1981, but the rest of their one recording session languished on dusty reels for a couple of decades until now. Think an even lower-fi Flying Lizards meets some Omaha outcasts.

KOMINAS – "Wild Nights in Guantanamo Bay" CD (S/R)
The best band out of the very young Taqwacores scene of Muslim-punk bands, the Kominas are funny, biting, and edgy. Most of their music is punk, though there's some rock thrown in as well. "Sharia Law in the USA" and "Suicide Bomb The Gap" should be taken in the same way as "Kill the Poor" and "Slave to My Dick," but you already knew that, right?

NO BUNNY – "Love Visions" LP (1-2-3-4-Go!)
Mix one part Ramones, one part Motown Girl Group, one part '90s garage punk, and a whole lot of complete insanity, and that's No Bunny. This is an "it band" that will stand the test of time. Did I mention the speedo and the bunny mask with the buck teeth?

UPTONES – "Skankin' Foolz Unite!" CD (Fun Fun Fun)
25 years after their first studio record (a 12" EP on 415 Records), Berkeley's longest-running ska band comes back with a full-length studio album that's chock full of the great writing and catchy tunes that made their 12", their 1988 live at Gilman CD, and their live shows so memorable. They're probably most well known for "Get Out of My Way," covered on Rancid's debut record. This collection of tunes will (hopefully) give them the attention they've deserved for so long.

DIP DAP – "Pfffft..." CD EP (S/R)
DIY UK male/female punk that's raw, energetic, and catchy. They'd be a *KBD* band before the internet, no question about it, but thanks to MySpace, they're easy to find. Their hit song? "Torcha!"

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO CANDYLAND – "Bird Roughs" LP (Recess)
Another "it band" that's gonna stand the test of time. Why? Because the band's underlying structure—Toys That Kill—is so rock-fucking-solid when it comes to music, lyrics, and art. Melodic in a Dillinger Four way, chunky in a Toys That Kill way, and tribal in a Crash Worship way. It all adds up to something new that you cannot deny.

FLIPPER – "Gone Fishin'" CD (Water)
Old-timers like me are still unhappy about the band's treatment of their original home, Subterranean Records, when they jumped to a major label in the '90s (that worked out well, huh?). But the purity of Flipper's punk drone remains unsullied by their attempts at cashing in ten years ago. This is their second studio full-length, and has just been reissued on local independent label Water, along with the three other Flipper releases on Subterranean, *Generic*, *Sex Bomb Baby*, and *Public Flipper Ltd.* While you can't get a second copy of the cover to cut out and assemble like you could back in the old days, you can finally have a digital version of some of their most cutting songs ever (see: "Sacrifice," "Talk Is Cheap").

V/A – "Des Jeunes Gens Modernes 1978-1983" LP (Naive)
Ever wondered what some pointy-headed intellectuals could do if they overanalyzed punk rock? Now you know—they wrote and recorded some of the coolest genre-bending takes on post-punk, disco, and sonic experimentation this side of industrial music. Includes "Tokio Airport" by Metal Boys, which is worth the price of admission alone!

EVERYTHING MUST GO – "Sonic Pornography" LP/CD (Calendar of Death)
Oakland's best band in years, Everything Must Go combines a healthy love for the Dead Boys and Turbonegro's *Apocalypse Dudes* with their own twisted, catchy take on life from around the bend. Yes, it's got the requisite number of Oakland punk veterans to boast the songwriting talent and punk rock riffs that other bands would kill for—think Christ on Parade's "Pressure to Succeed" crossed with Fang's "The Money Will Roll Right In." All of this makes Everything Must Go much more than just another band whose lead singer blows himself up every show with a jacket of fireworks in a series of pills-and-alcohol-fueled explosions! Yes, you read that right—he blows himself up on stage. There's no way this record couldn't be frickin' great.

Finally, one of the best things about 2008 is that both MRR *and 924 Gilman Street achieved non-profit status with the help of the SF non-profit Independent Arts & Media. (I'm on the board of Indy Arts as well as being a long-time volunteer for both* MRR *and Gilman.) Both punk rock institutions need your help NOW—anything from $5 to $50 to $50,000! (Details at artsandmedia.net!)*

CISSIE SCURLOCK

I disagree with the folks that say it was a bad year for music, and once again I made separate lists for 7"s and LPs. The runner-ups were abundant, including Rajoitus, Avskum, Eddy Current Suppression Ring, Insomnio, Descarados, Meatlocker, Chronic Seizure, Herds, NN, Kaiboushitsu, Logic Problem, Dead Section, Condominium, Mentally Challenged, etc...

7"s

KRIEGSHÖG – "Hardcore Hell" EP (HeartFirst)
I've already stated that *Hardcore Hell* is one of the most intense pieces of music that I've heard in a long time. Kriegshög is best listened to alone and at full volume, so you can revel in the crazed, dense sounds. It continues to get better with every listen.

SACRED SHOCK – "For a Living" EP (Schizophrenic)
Sacred Shock's sound is sharpened for pummeling, and each of these songs features hooks that get stuck in my head for days. The buildups, breakdowns, bridges, and solos all do their jobs with high confidence. These songs are catchy, aggressive, and full of character, and everything about 'em sounds just right.

NEEDLES – "Twisted Vision" EP (Bad Skulls / Lengua Armada)
Needles plays some low-end-fueled hardcore sure to make your speakers crackle under the weight. The dynamic movement of the songs and blown-out levels give it an intensity worthy of wonderment.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE – "Raw Energy" EP (Sorry State)
As the name implies, this Double Negative EP bludgeons your ears with some blown-out, barebones, fierce hardcore. It's a gruesome open wound that the rest should aspire to.

LOS MONJO – "Cerdos / La Peor Pesadilla" (No Options)
While the *Cobardes* EP is nearly as good, the song "Cerdos" is my favorite... Los Monjo plays near-perfect dark and desperate punk. The dirtiness and deception that they're singing about is evident even though I don't understand most of the words.

CRUDE – "Just Go Go Ahead / Earth" (H:G Fact)
Nice to finally see some new vinyl from Crude. On this 45, the band offers the world two more relentless, urgent hardcore punk tunes complete with boldly blazing guitar solos, galloping tight drumming, bright and playful bass-lines, and insane-sounding group shouts.

XYX – "Sistema de Terminacion Sexual" EP (S-S)
At this point in my life I don't like much music that I'd classify as "fun." Mexico's XYX defies my taste by tempering their *fun*-sounding punk with a gray and

jagged underbelly. The bass-lines slash and stab, while the confident and striking vocals add a desperate air to the mostly danceable punk songs.

BRAIN HANDLE "Smiling / Smiling Again" (Iron Lung)

Sharp guitars, pounding rhythms, and a loose nasal cavity are the core identifiers of Brain Handle's sound. The guitars burst throughout your head, while the rhythm section quickly closes in on you. The grating never lasts long, but by then the songs are holding you captive.

JOHNS TOWN ALOHA – "We Painted the Last Cult" EP (H:G Fact)

All of the songs on *We Painted the Last Cult* showcase ripping, wild guitar heroics and a framework that seems like it's poised to fall apart at any given nanosecond. Somehow, Johns Town Aloha maintains a grasp on the chaos and adds a dash of tunefulness to these noisy and frantic songs.

CULT RITUAL – "Haunted Ground" EP (Youth Attack!)

Swells of noise prepare your ears for some twisted and savage hardcore with madman-style vocals. Overall on *Haunted Ground* Cult Ritual keeps it heavy and fast, but they use slower rhythm-fucked parts, weird and wild guitar antics, intermittent fits of feedback, and other random madness to set an ugly and foreboding tone.

LPs (and 12"s):

INVASIÓN – "La Caza" 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)

Invasión plays hardcore that's nasty, dark, and abrasive to the point of existing on the fringes. The songs on *La Caza* use effects, long build-ups, and varying tempos to add to the forbidding, dense climate—sometimes they creep and crawl, scraping along to the rhythmic sound of your cerebral decay, and at other times they pulverize. The full-on intensity is pretty hard to ignore. *La Caza* is in the running for best hardcore record of the '00s.

LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Near Dark" LP (Wicked Witch)

Lebenden Toten's hiss-and-hum-fueled, wall-of-squeak hardcore punk stylings found their way onto a second full-length. *Near Dark* is a solid follow-up to the band's exceptional *Death Culture Deprivation* 8". A layer of varying ear-piercing frequencies still adorns each song, but at times the noise is so precise that it seems like an extra instrument. Don't neglect to check the lyric sheet for some worthwhile brain-fodder.

PISSCHRIST – "Victims of Faith" LP (Yellow Dog)

Victims of Faith is a riff 'n' hook fiesta—the best Swedish hardcore record of '08 was released by an Australian band?! The bottom-heavy stompers "Rise Up" and "Victims of Faith" make TOTALITÄR's absence a little more bearable.

ÄÄRITILA – "...Ennen Huomista, Tänä Tuomiopäivänä..." LP (Feral Ward)

Ääritila is ultimately standard Scandi-spiced hardcore, but these guys helped write the code and this record is relentless. They've got this tough element that isn't all that common with bands from the region, and it works well, particularly with their slowburnin' songs. The lengthy tracklist reads like a Finnish short story, but the varied and quality tunes are enough to keep my exhausted ears at command.

MEANWHILE – "Reality or Nothing" LP (Feral Ward)

Meanwhile offers no surprises on *Reality or Nothing*, and that's a good thing. Instead of fucking with the formula, they've made a record that rips from start to finish, and the raw, hard-hitting power of these songs is astounding.

SEX/VID – "Communal Living" 12" (Dom America)

Best Sex/Vid release to date. The extra guitar seems to add texture and atmosphere to the songs, and obviously enhances the wall of sound. Dunno what else to say that hasn't been said before. Truly awesome hardcore record.

STRAIGHTJACKET NATION – "Cheap Kicks" LP (Short Fuse)

Aussie fuckers mining the ghosts of Cleveland's not-too-distant past. Actually I'd say Straightjacket Nation borrows equally from H-100s, Inmates, etc. and early-'80s Boston hardcore. The songs on *Cheap Kicks* pack loads of power and offer a mace-to-the-face good time.

BASTARD SONS OF APOCALYPSE – "Strangled by the System" LP (Todo Destruido)

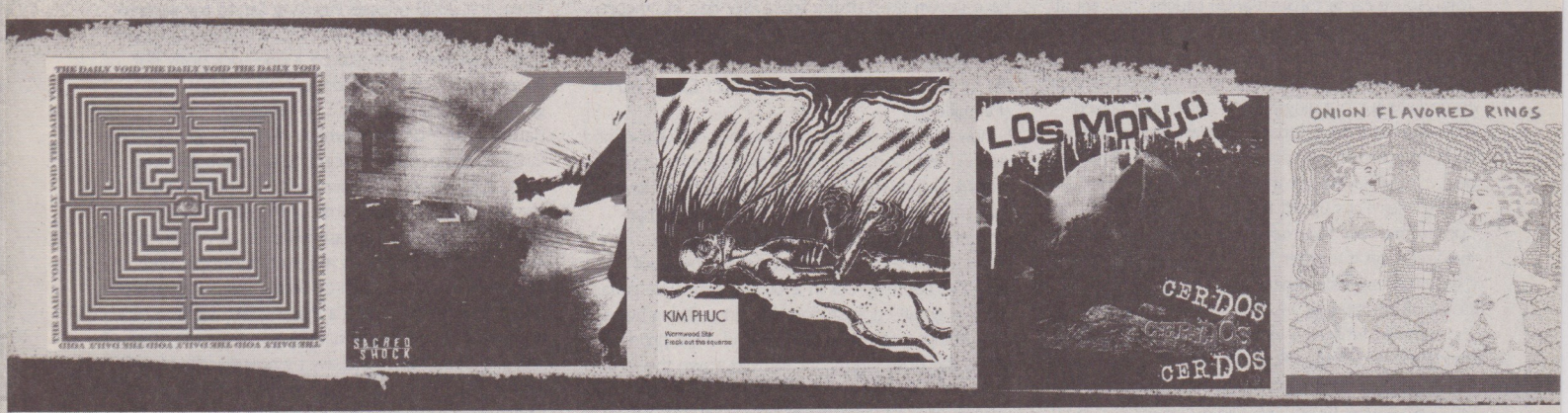
BSA plays no-frills Discharge-inspired hardcore. *Strangled by the System* lacks any of the fancy production or, conversely, noise and delay effects that seem to have become a staple of the genre, and this stripped-down approach places more emphasis on the strength of the songs. Lucky for BSA, they've delivered some hook-laden ragers!

LIMP WRIST – 12" (self-released)

This one-sided 12" seems a little bit darker hued and more adventurous than previous Limp Wrist material. The songs still feature an abundance of quick and precise riffs and tight playing, but "Spun," "Knuckles," and "Bought Out" offer tension-building, rhythmic momentum, and I especially appreciate the frenzied single-note guitar work on "Collapse."

RUIDOSA INMUNDICIA / SOLID DECLINE – split LP (Residue / Thought Crime)

Austria's Ruidosa Inmundicia plays ten songs of full-throttle, enraged hardcore punk. They don't offer many twists and turns, but their powerfully fast and infectious, energetic songs make them one of the best that Central Europe currently has to offer. Berlin's Solid Decline is a truly original and abrasive hardcore band. Their songs are mostly short and fast and are accented by weird, jagged hooks, unexpected tempo changes, and harsh vocals. Inventive and refreshing.



RYAN MURPHY

DESPISE YOU – Live 2008

Some real negative personalities here—not only was their set one of hate, fear, and reality being forced upon a cringing yet willing audience, but these dudes seemed to be *soooo* pissed that people were even there to take the abuse. The band acquired instant infamy from their appearance on the first volume of Deep Six Records' *Reality* compilation in the mid-'90s and built a long legacy of immortal EP releases; I believe the first show they played here in SF last year was their second show ever. The devastating set from Inglewood's finest was definitely a high point of the year for me—some of the most *brue-tal* powerviolence around executed to perfection by the dudes who helped write the book. All the elements were right for the show: high anticipation that was exceeded, the male/female vox, the masterful Chris Dodge handling bass duties, and a packed house watching in horror. No more feelings.

SYPHILITIC VAGINIAS – "Complete Studio Collection" CD (Rescued From Life)

I'll be the first one to admit that stupid band names go a long way when I'm being introduced to new music—they tend to destroy any potential respect and/or musical admiration I may have because the band seems to not take themselves seriously and in turn I cannot take them seriously. To a degree, I can get down for some silly shit—names, artwork, whatever (I was in a band named Nuclear Vasectomy, for fuck's sake)—but at a certain point I don't even want to try it. This certainly held true for Syphilitic Vagina—I was completely turned off by the name and the *Spinal Tap* aura they had going for them. This is before I actually heard this flawless collection of satanic metal debauchery, mind you. Imagine if Motörhead had Maiden's Steve Harris writing the music with partner Dave Murray on lead guitar and the attitude of the UK82 punx. Fucking delicious. From metalheads to rockers to punks, this sound is something we've been waiting for for a *loooong* time. It's the impeccable execution that is most impressive. Monster riffs with faux machinegun and bomb explosions add to the chaotic mix of hooks and musicianship. This is seriously one of the best pick-ups I got all year. The CD is all of the recorded work they have up until now, and the tracking—I believe—is set up as so the most recent material is first and the earlier releases are last. Lemme tell ya, they are only getting better!

JERKS – "Get Your Woofin' Dog Off Me / Hold My Hand" (Underground)
I think the stack of copies that made it out this year were bootlegs of this classic 1978 single. The sleeves are identical to the original and have no current contact info. I have an old copy of this record but was compelled to revisit this great, snotty *KBD* 45 when I began seeing it in record bins around town. Both sides keep the listener interested in this gem; the Jerks' most recognizable song, "Get Your Woofin' Dog Off Me," is a catchy, up-tempo pogo scorcher with a not-so-subtle salute to Iggy's "I Wanna Be Your Dog" towards the end! The B-side is equally as enjoyable as the Jerks zip through a love ditty that will have you tappin' your foot and bobbin' your head on the first spin!

FY FAN – "Levande Lik" EP (Feral Ward) & Live
Last March the Swedish wrecking ball known as Fy Fan came to the good ol' US of A to crush minds and drink. They did both while quite obviously lacking in the style and grace departments, yet these ferocious Swedes barreled through set after set of Discharge-inspired mayhem while provoking an awe-inspired ruckus from fellow partygoers. The Feral Ward 7" is a straightforward punch in the face, the kind that hurts so good you're forced to drop the needle again and again until the lyrics start making sense (they're in Swedish). These guys played three shows in the Bay Area when they were here, topping bills with the likes of Violent Minds, Acts of Sedition, Socialcide, Needles (that's just one show!), Annihilation Time, Born/Dead, and Nightstick Justice; that alone should tell you how much fun this music is. No-nonsense, drink and dance music…so much fun!

TOTAL ABUSE – LP (Deranged) & Live
I never got into the *Sex Pig* EP or the demo 7" that came out. Just never caught on to those—whatever; I wasn't sweating it much. Then over the summer, Total Abuse came through and I caught their set at a house in Oakland. This completely *floored* me! They totally caught me off guard; it was loud, disturbed, and they were totally non-cognizant of their immediate surroundings. These dudes just played their style of tormented, noise-damaged music to a fairly non-responsive crowd (from what I remember). Maybe it was just that everyone had trouble picking their jaws up off the floor as I did, but I don't remember too many beaming responses to their set. I, on the other hand, still have not gotten over what happened that night. The singer just stood off to the side, next to a towering guitar amp and rambled while the rest of the band hid behind their front-and-center equipment sharing some well developed, wall-of-sound, almost-falling-apart racket. No pose here—these guys didn't care what was happening and they sunk me into the ground. Their recently released LP on Deranged Records is the material they drew from that night and I highly recommend picking that slab up. These dudes are the best at what they do right now.

DRY ROT – "This Is a Forest / Lumber Yard" (Deerhealer)
Mind-fuck of the year—hands down the most impressively distinct and, honestly, scary release of the year. This record is composed of two jazzy, atmospheric numbers, complete with horns and some very subtle keys. All instrumental, the A-side, "This Is a Forest," somehow in its simplicity and purity takes the listener to a safe place. Lightly developed, the sax leads you through a free-form performance that has the listener reflect on the positive and beautiful, such as the song title might suggest. When the record is flipped, one hears the haunting sounds of "Lumber Yard." Enter: that sinking feeling. Maybe it's all psychosomatic, maybe it's intelligent design (haha), but these two jazzercised tracks played in sequence are really taxing. It's like they give you something only for you to watch them destroy it, as the striking titles suggest. Dry Rot exemplifies with elegance and ease. Outrageous stuff, very cool. Fuck religion.

BILLY BAO – "Accumulation" EP (Xerox Music) & "Dialects of Shit" LP (Parts Unknown)
Fuck tha haterz, these are incredible releases by one of the most important groups of people in music today. With every release Billy Bao drops, I gain more and more interest. I admit the music is not something I listen to everyday; it certainly has its time and place in the soundtrack to my life. But the gravity of both the lyrical subject matter as well as the musical innovation (or is it degradation?) is fucking brilliant. Top marks for these guys. I like the Brainbombs comparison Parts Unknown gives them; while it's a bit off the mark, I see the similarities blaze between the two. Lately it seems people have grown tired of the tricks Billy Bao has incorporated on his records. I find them poignant. I love what's going on here.

IRON AGE – "The Way Is Narrow / Satori Part 1" (Painkiller)
Simply the *best* record to come out of 2008, *period*. Austin, TX's hardcore outfit Iron Age drops the weight of the world on your chest with the instant hardcore classic *The Way Is Narrow*. Mid-tempo sledgehammers pound away the whole four minutes and 57 seconds of the catchiest beast of a song I've come across in a *loooong* time. The guitar work is great—a fresh solo and an amazing hook keep things interesting on that end—the production keeps the drums up front to hold down the structure, and all while the vocals somehow scream out urgent pleas to the listener. Tops. Thick as a board hardcore that does not disappoint. The flipside to this EP is a cover of Japan's Flower Travelin' Band, apparently a hippie rock band from the 1970s. As unappealing as that sounds, their version of "Satori Part 1" is a must-hear, especially if you are familiar with Iron Age. It's fucking amazing, I have never heard the original and I assume if I ever do it will only serve to impress me more with what the Iron Age guys did with it. Heavy, punchy, catchy, and fucking cool. Some of the best artwork all year, too.

MIND ERASER – "Conscious Unconsciousness" LP (Painkiller)
The most anticipated album of 2008 in my eyes, that is for fucking sure. The very prospect of a new Mind Eraser album nearly made my year, and the fact that it is a *two-song* 12" blew me away! The masters of heavy, they not only bring the power but sprinkle the record with ape-shit solos and chaos as well! This particular release showcases some epic songwriting, focusing more on the prolonged thick-jamz they have a knack for without losing the harsh edge that has won over so many people in the past. Definitely a departure from their last release, *Glacial Reign*, but a different record is what I wanted and it's certainly what I got. The artwork conveys it all; this is a punishing metal album played by the owners of heavy in the hardcore scene. Well done and bravo muthafuckaz.

COLA FREAKS – "Ingenting Set" EP (Hjernespind), "Dødt Batteri / Nej!" (Local Cross), & split EP w/ Autistic Youth (Black Water / Taken By Surprise)
I know these guys are the little darlings of many and because of that there are those who love to hate on them. But the three 7"s that were released last year cannot be ignored for both their musical merit as well as their undeniable growth as a band. The first EP from these Danish punks, released in 2007, was a personal favorite—sharp *KBD*-style zappers, more of which I could not wait to get my hands on. Their first 2008 release, *Ingenting Set*, to my surprise was much different and way more mature. I thought these guys were going to be a one-trick pony, but to my delight they developed a bit and just kept getting better and better. The release of "Dodt Batteri / Nej!" on the Cambridge, MA label Local Cross continued their ascent to a unique and awesome place in modern punk fucking rock. Taking the simple outline from records of the early days of punk and inserting a measured dose of Wipers progressiveness, Cola Freaks are putting out hit after hit. Just in the last month or two, a split with Autistic Youth was released with a hyper-speed version of "Paranoid" from their first EP. A good showing that doesn't bleed the sound dry by nostalgically revisiting a (great) song from their (not so distant) past. These guys have carved a nice niche and I look forward to more.

MIKE HOWES

NOISEAR – "Pyroclastic Annihilation" CD (RSR)
There are a lot of drummer jokes in the world of music but Bryan Fajardo (Phobia, Gridlink, Noisear) is a drummer I think can make a band. He's not all of Noisear—this is a band, not a showcase for one person—but Bryan's playing is amazing on this. Before I heard this CD, I saw them live and was left speechless. The CD was no different. Raw, fast, and vicious grindcore. The CD includes a Hail of Rage cover and six (!) Discordance Axis covers. If there is one grindcore record you listen to from 2008, make it this one.

PROTESTANT – "The Hate, The Hollow" CD (Halo of Flies)
Not many hardcore records have turned me on of late. This one blew me away. They're doing an East Coast tour in March and April with Fall of Efrafa. Oh, how I wish that tour would make it west. Heavy, dark hardcore at its finest. "Free Us From…" and "Disgrace" are examples of what I love in hardcore.

PHOBIA – "22 Random Acts of Violence" LP (Willowtip / Deep Six)
Every year when a new Phobia record comes out, I expect to be underwhelmed. I love Phobia but have also been listening to them for fifteen years and this being their sixth full-length I expected to throw it on and think, "Oh, just more Phobia." This happened with their 2006 release, *Cruel*, as well. I listen and can't believe they keep improving. 22 tracks in 28 minutes of pure politically charged, pissed grindcore.

HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH – "Goatmeal" 5" (Cowabunga!)
My favorite release from 2008 that I discovered writing for *MRR*. As I wrote in my review, 19 *fast* songs on a 5". Grindcore and powerviolence all

done at hyper-speed. This defined short, fast, and loud for me in 2008. From Boise, Idaho. Playing some West Coast dates in March—don't blink, you'll miss the show.

ROTTEN SOUND – "Cycles" CD (Spinefarm)
Maybe I should call my top ten of 2008 my top ten grindcore releases of 2008. I love grindcore and love Rotten Sound. From Finland but they have mastered the neighboring Swedish grindcore sound.

THE ENDLESS BLOCKADE – "Primitive" CD (20 Buck Spin)
Slow, fast, noise, fast, slow. Doom, hardcore, grindcore, noise. Wonderful.

CRIPPLE BASTARDS – "Variante Alla Morte" CD (FETO)
What a surprise. I think this is their best release yet.

NIGHTSTICK JUSTICE – "Claustrophobic" EP (Grave Mistake)
Who doesn't love '80s-style hardcore anthems?

BRUISE VIOLET – "N.O.L.A." EP (Emancypunx)
Hardcore. HARDCORE! Women from Los Angeles making piss hardcore.

THOUSANDS WILL DIE – "A Carcass Is Only Dead Once" EP (RSR)
Grindcore meets death metal meets feedback-laden sludge. Looking forward to finally seeing this band live.

SEX/VID – "Nests" EP (Dom America)
A lot has been written about this band so no need for me to go into it. I love it because of the impression of walking on the edge of chaos and the feeling of it being deconstructed hardcore. Blah, blah, blah and I dance around silly when hearing it. "Always Home" = "I Wanna Be Your Dog"?

SATANIC THREAT – "In To Hell" EP (Hell's Headbangers)
A great idea, perfectly executed. If I had heard this in 1985 instead of hearing Minor Threat for the first time, Satanic Threat would be my favorite hardcore band ever.

Favorite Collection:

V/A – "Bay Area Thrash III Ballistic Thrash Detonation" CD (625 Thrash)
Want a taste of some of the thrash, grindcore, and hardcore going on in the Bay Area? One of two favorite comps since last year's *MRR* comp, "Public Safety."

Favorite Reissue/Discography:

HATRED SURGE – "Collection 2005-2007" CD (Blastasfuk)
I think this band has always been underrated. On this disc, you get 34 tracks including five from a demo, a Despise You cover, a Disrupt cover, and an Agnostic Front cover. I've always loved the contrast between male and female vocals.

BOB GOLDIE

INSURGENTS – "Yuppie Mindset" EP (Endless Blockade)
Out of the scores of new records and CDs I have the privilege of listening to each month here at the compound, only a few cause me to raise an eyebrow in interest (trust me, too much music can be overkill at times). This one had me going from the second I put the needle to wax. Total Jerry's Kids worship, which, when done right like these Aussie punks easily do, I'll take any day over most of the "new sounds" clogging the airwaves.

LIMP WRIST – 12" EP (self-released)
I wasn't sure if I should include this since the official release hasn't happened yet, but since copies were sold on tour and we reviewed it during the year, I suppose I will. Unlike most bands that get lamer with each subsequent album, Limp Wrist keeps throwing out surprises and maintains their relevancy. This EP replaces an ounce of speed for a pound of power, like the brilliant *Want Us Dead* EP from a couple of years ago, and in my opinion their later output is better than anything they've done yet.

INSOMNIO – "Walking on the String" EP (No Way)
I had to struggle between either including this EP in the top ten or the excellent *No Escape* LP which also came out this year, but my prejudice against LPs finally won out and this four-song gem gets the honors. Insomnio channels the spirit of early-'80s melodic hardcore bands like the Cheifs and add a nice *KBD* (or *Bloodstains Across Spain*) punk rock and roll touch. Killer stuff that will definitely go in your "not for trade" pile.

NEEDLES – "Twisted Vision" EP (Lengua Armada)
For years I've been trying to suppress the angry side of me that has generally led me down the wrong path in life, making me focus on the negatives, and basically caused me to be an antisocial misanthrope. This band is not helping! The six songs of over-the-top intensity and fury on this EP are guaranteed to bring your blood pressure up a notch—in a good way—and the poignant lyrics complement the instrumental wrath. If this doesn't renew your faith in hardcore, nothing will.

HUMAN MESS – "Uncaged Animal" EP (No Way)
If I was forced to choose my favorite record of the year, my number one out of my top ten, then I think *Uncaged Animal* gets the nod. I absolutely love this EP; it's fast and chaotic, and it's everything that punk should be. Members hail from Loser Life and the Contaminators, which sort of makes sense as it sounds a bit like a combination of the two. Fucking awesome!

SICK MORMONS – "Taekwando" EP (Gummopunx)
Yet another amazing band emerging from the European continent, thus ensuring this decade in punk belongs to that region. Sounding sort of like a blend of the Adolescents, early Bad Religion, and Shattered Faith, these young Dutch punks know how to craft catchy songs without crossing the line into pop. I want more!

SUSPECT PARTS – "Seventeen" EP (Deranged)
The title track of this three-song EP would be my number one song of the year if we included such a thing in the top ten. This tune reminds me of the awesome Australian band the Fun Things or the song "Amoeba" by the Adolescents. I've always been a sucker for melodic "ahahhh" backup vocals, when done right (and damn it, this is done right!). The band features Justin from the Clorox Girls and Red Dons, so you should have an idea of the power-pop/punk sound that's going on.

SEX/VID – "Nests" EP (Dom America)
I hate hype and usually avoid trendy shit that the hipster posers are all into, but fucking Sex/Vid transcends this prejudice and deserves all the attention that they've been getting (and then some!). I chose this EP over the recently released album because these three songs are relentless and manic, and will leave you breathless upon completion—just like seeing the band live. You're really missing out if you haven't tuned into this phenomenon.

DEEP SLEEP – "Manic Euphoria" EP (Grave Mistake)
Aside from the obvious Descendents influence, I think this band is pretty goddamn original compared to much of the generic poop being shoveled on us these days. I find myself flipping the record over several times before taking it off, and I even get hesitant about filing it away out of immediate reach. *Manic Euphoria* is like a six-track mini-album full of great lyrics and a perfect mixture of melody and angst that will leave you satisfied in the end.

REPROBATES – "Stress" EP (No Way)
WASTE MANAGEMENT – "Get Your Mind Right" EP (Painkiller)
I included both of these EPs together for two reasons: they both work on the same level, as far as paying homage to a particular band or region, and I only had one spot left on my top ten! I was beginning to get a bit spent on the whole USHC revival thing earlier in the year, but then these came out and totally renewed my love for the style. I mean, so what if Waste Management bows down before the SSD/Impact Unit altar? And who cares if the Reprobates have a shrine dedicated to Jerry's Kids' *Is This My World* LP? Both of these rule.

Reissues:

SUBHUMANS – "Death Was Too Kind" LP (Alternative Tentacles)
One of the first punk bands to captivate me back in the '80s was the British Subhumans, and I had *heard* about a Canadian band with the same name, but had no interest in checking them out for some stupid reason. This irrational act made me wait at least ten years until I finally listened to the *Firing Squad* EP and spent the rest of the night kicking my own ass for being so stubborn. That's ten years lost of not having the friggin' Subhumans in my life! This collection has that EP, the "Death to the Sickoids" single, and the self-titled EP. Best of all, there're two rare tracks as well. Essential punk.

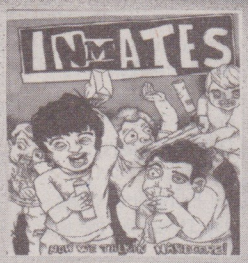
RATTUS – "Fucking Disco" EP (Hohnie)
I know most people dig the later hardcore stuff that Rattus made, but this punk rock 1981 EP is my personal favorite. This six-song record stands out from the others as it would fit a *Killed By Death*-type of comp better than it would a Finnish hardcore one. Great stuff.

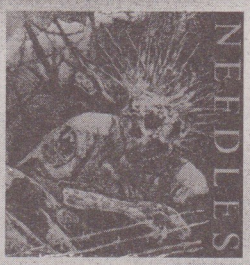
V/A – "Local Anesthetic" CD (Smooch)
The fact that I lived in Colorado for ten years makes my placing this in the top ten only slightly biased because this comp stands on its own without my endorsement. The Centennial State didn't have a shit ton of bands, but it had some real good ones. This comp collects some of the better of the first hardcore era like the Bum Kon, Frantix, and White Trash EPs, as well as amazing punk singles like Rok Tots, Glueons, and Defex. Still waiting on the vinyl version, though, so the CD will do for now!

ANTIDOTE – "Thou Shall Not Kill" LP (bootleg)
Like Urban Waste and the Abused, Antidote put out one release of some of the best New York hardcore ever and then essentially disappeared before the dreaded crossover metal trend began.

The EP tracks capture the glory days of East Coast hardcore, when the music was pissed off, but not in the thuggish tough-guy way that would emerge later in the scene. The live stuff filling the rest of this release is OK, but the studio tracks are what make it indispensable.

GOVERNMENT ISSUE – "Make an Effort" EP (Dr. Strange)
This isn't the first time *Make an Effort* has been reissued, but this belongs in every self-respecting punk's collection so some new copies need to be thrown out every ten years or so. Four tracks here from 1982 that capture G.I. in their defining years when Brian Baker was on guitar (not that Tom Lyle didn't rule as well) and John Stabb was starting to get a little crazy. "Teenager in a Box," "Twisted Views," and "No Way Out" are classics, plus you get a version of "Sheer Terror" slightly different from the *Boycott Stabb* version.





LAYLA GIBBON

Every year I do this someone claims it was a shitty year for new releases, and it makes me wonder when the mythical time that all the new releases were mighty actually was. 1981? At any rate there were a ton of great records this year, I am sure I am skipping some that either I missed out on or am forgetting in a did-I-leave-the-oven-on style. But I always feel that way.

1. SEX/VID – "Communal Living" 12" (Dom America)
I know some of you are passing out from the shock of this particular selection, but to be frank, fuck you. My favorite band put out the album of the year. True miscreant sound—a heavy record without any macho posturing, it sounds as mysterious and is as all consuming as Die Kreuzen. Doesn't sound like them, but gives me the same feeling. "Communal living / Everything is shared / Whether you like it or not."

2. SILLA ELÉCTRICA – Demo and Cloaca EP (self-released / Solo Para Punks)
This band just sounds exciting. Trashed out frantic punk rock from Madrid, with ferocious male/female vocals, referencing classic Spanish punk like VULPESS, but you can imagine kids slam-dancing at the Masque circa '78 to shit like this also. Another 7" is coming out this year, and I'll bet you anything it'll make my 2009 top ten. Spanish punk is on fire right now, it's kind of unreal how much incredible music came out this year from that region.

3. DOUBLE NEGATIVE – "Raw Energy" (Sorry State) and CULT RUTUAL – "Haunted Ground EPs (Youth Attack)
The two best hardcore 7"s of the year? I couldn't pick between them. Blah Blah Blah, '80s revival sound, gimme a Quaalude already—this shit blows away all those generic "skateboard hardcore" replicants. If this is the direction hardcore is going in I am fucking psyched because I can't take another Mystic Records tribute act.

4. LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Near Dark" LP (Wicked Witch)
Chanel may be the best front person in a band right now, her voice is so killer and watching this band play live is fucking transcendent! This distorted, ruptured, violent sound—you can't help but wanna fuck shit up.

5. XYX – "Sistema De Terminacion Sexual" EP (S-S)
A snotty vocalist that sounds bored and disgusted at the same time intoning over some of this year's most compelling mutant art punk. When I first heard it, I think of a bunch of teenage girls trying to cover Suicide. This 7" withstands the hyperbole—someone needs to write a Monterrey scene report, so much good art-damaged Mexcian punk.

6. BLACK TIME "ICU" EP (Skulltones)
I have never really gotten into this band, even though the references are right, French new wave cinema, scratched up garage, but I tend to get into it, just not that much. A listen once and file affair. But this is kind of a perfect 7". It makes me think of being a teenage mod grrrl, hanging out in my room and listening to the Cupid Car Club 7" and the Gories *Outta Here* LP, going to see Huggy Bear, and getting grounded after late Northern Soul nights.

7. INVASIÓN – "La Caza" LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Why the fuck did they not play California? Seriously. This record is crushingly good, and makes it even more depressing that I will never get to see them play live.

8. MUTATORS – "Secret Life" LP (Nominal)
The MUTATORS are incredible, with shards of Harry Pussy style vengeance in the vocals, which is what make this band. I said before that the music makes me think of late-'80s art damage like Pussy Galore, Royal Trux, SST-era Sonic Youth, a sound that's post Teenage Jesus and the Jerks *and* Black Flag. Leif Hall's voice is what lifts them up over their generic noize-no-wave-freemo novelty-costume counterparts; hopefully this record will silence all that tired trust fund art school bullshit. Seriously bloodcurdling, it's hard to listen to without giving it your full attention, it's not a casual listen and for some reason makes me think of listening to *My War*. That same totality.

9. LIMP WRIST – one-sided 12" (self-released) / NEEDLES – "Twisted Vision EP (Bad Skulls / Lengua Armada) / NN – "Buitres" EP {Lengua Armada)
I know it's totally cheating, but this is the Martin Sorrondeguy section. How can a man who just finished graduate school, and is now a high school art teacher, as well as a long-time *MRR* shitworker also have the time to front three of the most incredible bands around? The Limp Wrist 12" technically isn't out yet, we all got Japan tour pressings, but it's easily their best record. So, so, so raging, with killer breakdowns, and the most charged guitar sound. I can't wait till kids know the words to these songs so I can watch 'em lose their shit in the pit. I really couldn't pick between NN or Needles, I have had many discussions with people where they'll claim a favorite but that's just not possible. NN is classic sounding Spanish punk (the best genre in the world, except maybe Italian hardcore…) whereas Needles features the rhythm section from Talk Is Poison and guitar and vocals from Limp Wrist members. Either way the vocals of Garlicka Stanx will take you out.

10. BILLY CHILDISH – "Thatcher's Children" EP (Damaged Goods)
Man, this record had me so psyched for the LP, which I then found to be super boring. This song is an anthem though; to my youth watching Thatcher decimate the British working classes, and the welfare state, the unions and the fucking culture. Laying the ground for the economic collapse by destroying the industry and shipping it all out to so-called third world countries. Fucking hate her vile venomous soul! At any rate, this version of the song is anthemic, makes me think of listening to ATV, Action! Time! And Vision! Over and over and over, pent up bile you can dance to. A genius 45 for a similarly fragmented time.

Couldabeens: **Mentally Challenged, Billy Bao, Condominium, Catatonic Youth, Herds.**
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FOR LANCE BY LIBERTY

It's the end of June, 2008, and it's been eight and a half months since Lance passed away. I think of him all the time, every day, and wish that things had turned out differently — that he'd never had hypertension, or that they'd discovered it earlier, before it had damaged his internal organs, or, or, or… It's very hard even to write this because I miss him so much.

I think a lot about what it means to be creative in our world, the sacrifices one makes. The creative class, that works independently rather than with the collective-bargaining power of a large corporation, has been hit particularly hard by the health insurance crisis in the United States. Want the flexibility to take off for tour for a month every year? Want to start your own project? Ideologically opposed to working for a major corporation? It's increasingly difficult to get health insurance in the US without working for a large company. And god forbid you come down seriously ill without health insurance, because once you are, it's nearly impossible to get health insurance.

I think in many, many ways, the punk community is ahead of mainstream America. We're vegetarian and vegan, disdain the fast food restaurants serving up cheap salt, sugar, fat, and starch concoctions cloaked in marketing, and cook for ourselves using actual food. Punks bike, walk, and take subways, busses, and trains rather than buying a McMansion in the far suburbs and driving three hours a day. In school, they always tried to brainwash us into thinking that one could only be fit through competitive sports, but we've found slamming, dancing, and moshing all night to our favorite bands, walking, biking, hiking, and martial arts. Despite being so-called freaks, we've got an incredibly strong community, a really huge network of people who are busy creating, talking, writing, and playing music.

Cringer at ABC-No-Rio

photo: Justine DeMetrick

Life without health care:

Lance spent the spring of 1999 coughing and completely exhausted. He thought he had bronchitis, and went to the Haight Street Free Clinic for antibiotics. They took one look at him, thought he was about to have a heart attack, and sent him to the emergency room in an ambulance. Lance stayed in the hospital for a week, and was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. At the age of 32. He later told me that the doctors thought he was about to die the whole time he was there.

He hadn't had a physical since he was in high school, so he didn't learn that he had developed high blood pressure, "the silent killer," until his heart was already severely damaged. I will never understand why there is so little emphasis here on preventive care and a quick yearly physical where they check your blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and check for any serious conditions that run in your family. There are so many machines, so many incredibly expensive medications to keep you alive for a little while longer, but so little effort placed into not getting seriously ill in the first place. They gave him tons of medicine: heart medicines, blood pressure medicines, diuretics. He was incredibly weak and tired easily, but after some months on the meds, his health improved.

He remained mostly better until summer 2006, when he had another emergency hospitalization — his blood pressure had soared out of control and severely damaged his kidneys and heart. Throughout it all, he kept up well in the face of such difficult news, better than I did.

These are just some of the things Lance went through: dialysis three times a week for four hours a session, an incredibly restricted diet: low sodium, low cholesterol, high protein, low phosphate, and low potassium, an endless number of imaging tests, an electrophysiological study to test whether he needed an implantable cardioverter device for his heart, talk of a heart-kidney transplant, paperwork for Medicare, paperwork for the Texas Assistance Program, blood tests every week, a number of serious infections related to dialysis that required hospitalization, so many bills we could have wallpapered our apartment several times over with them, so many calls from medical bill collectors that we quit answering our phone, a battery of tests to qualify for a kidney transplant, and trying to figure out how to pay $3,000 a month for anti-rejection medicines for the rest of his life if he were lucky enough to get a kidney transplant.

As he became increasingly ill over the last several years of his life, he tended to stay at home more, felt too tired to go out to see bands and friends he normally would have gone out to see with a lot of excitement. So if he didn't return your call, didn't come see your band play, didn't get back to you the way he normally would have, please try to understand…

So many people in the punk community helped out in so many ways. Every time that Lance had some long, difficult hospitalization, he'd cheer up when I told him all the people who were asking after him, sending messages, writing letters, calling. There were benefit shows set up on several different continents, and Chad, thirty bands, and five labels (No Idea, Cat Food Money, Vinehell, Jerk Off, and Tic Tac Totally) put out the *Let's Do It for Lance!* benefit CD, which was in his Discman when he died. The benefit proceeds helped ease the stress of the never-ending co-pays for hospital visits, the expensive prescriptions, and his planned kidney transplant.

On October 12, 2007, Lance collapsed during dialysis. He'd had a very serious dialysis-related infection in September, and this infection had returned with a vengeance. He received immediate CPR from medical professionals, but he never regained consciousness and died on October 21, 2007, at the age of 40. It just kills me that all of this could have been prevented, if he'd had a simple physical ten years ago and gotten his blood pressure under control.

EAT A PACKET OF GELATIN BEFORE A DRUG TEST TO BIND THE THC
MOUTH WASH: FOR TOOTH INFECT
SCABIES CAN GO AWAY IF YOU:
RUB YER-SELF DOWN WITH turpentine!
OR
BATHE IN Boron
STAPH!!!
GET YOUR TWEAKER ON AND USE COLLOIDAL SILVER!
TIN FOIL HAT
Hungover?
SHOTGUN A BEER AND/OR EAT A BLUE FREEZY POPSICLE (IT HAS TO BE BLUE) AND/OR CONSUME A BURGER KING BIG FISH SANDWICH — WHILE IN THE SHOWER
B.K.
THIS IS BULLSHIT!
FINAL WORD
SOME THINGS LISTED MAY WORK I SOME SITUATIONS BUT SUCCESS IS USUALLY REACHED IN COMBINATIO WITH A LARGER, MORE REGULAR + HEALTHY REGIMENT. STAPH, ESPECIALLY THE NEW ANTIBIOT RESISTANT STRAIN CALLED M.R.S. (SOUNDS LIKE "MERSA") IS NO TO BE DEALT WITH DIY STYL SO PLEASE, DON'T BE TOO PUNK TO GET MEDICAL HELP!! WE NEED ALL THE PUNX TO BE HEALTHY + GROWING OLD TOGETHER SO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF !!!
UP DA PUNX
PUNK MEDICAL MYTHS

FUCK HSV

BY KATIE B

So you've had the misfortune of contracting the herpes virus, and you're fucking bummed out because not only is it extremely painful, but there's so much stigma attached to it, and you're afraid people won't have sex with you if you tell them. Not telling someone that you have herpes before having sex with them is never an option, but don't worry—at least one in four people already have either oral or genital herpes. There are even some people that are asymptomatic, meaning they can carry the virus and spread it to others without ever having an outbreak. The asymptomatic people most likely have no idea that they have the herps, (that's what I like to call them) so if you can't figure out who you got it from, and everyone swears up and down that they don't have it, maybe they're not lying. Or rather, maybe they don't know that they're lying. Also, you can contract it and it can lie dormant in you for a really long time, years even, before you ever get an outbreak. So it can be impossible to know when and where you got it. I've never found out and I'm kind of glad that I don't have a particular person to blame. I'm more angry that this highly contagious virus isn't talked about very much in our culture and instead just keeps getting spread because people aren't informed about how to keep their shit contained.

Another tricky thing about this bastard of a virus is that condoms do not protect you from getting the herps. So don't think you're safe just because you use them. It's spread from skin to skin contact in places that condoms can't often cover and the virus can be on your skin even when there's no physical evidence. That's why you should stop having sex at the first signs of an outbreak. *You are highly contagious at this point.* And maybe even wait two or three days after the last sign of herpes is gone, just to play it safe. It is also possible to give your oral herpes to someone's genitals and vice-versa.

Once you find out you have it, though, you should call all the people you've had sex with recently and tell them so they can get tested. It's kind of a sucky thing to have to do, but it's really not that bad. And while we're on the subject of getting tested, make sure you've gotten tested and you know for sure you have the herpes virus and not something else. A good friend of mine asked me about symptoms of the herps and I told him about them and he was convinced for a while that he had it, but it turned out he had something called *Moluscum Contagiousum*. They have similar symptoms, but some definite differences. He was lucky, because he just took some drugs and got rid of it. So if you have any weird shit down there, get tested before you start taking supplements, altering your diet, and putting cream on yourself that burns up your junk.

Anyway, this bit of information I'm writing is for everyone with herpes, but particularly for those with compromised immune systems—thanks to the overuse of antibiotics in our culture, acne medication, birth control, or whatever—that get outbreaks frequently, meaning once a month or so. They told me at Planned Parenthood that six or more outbreaks a year was too many, and they recommended that I take Acyclovir. It was sixty dollars a month. I found out recently, though, that Acyclovir is most effective if you start taking it within the first year of contracting the virus. If you can afford it, that is. I tried taking it once about six or seven years ago and it got rid of my outbreak, but then I had a way worse one almost immediately, so I was like, fuck this junk. Pharmaceuticals have fucked up my health pretty badly, so I try not to take them if I don't have to. I prefer trying herbal remedies first. By taking supplements and regulating your diet, your life with the herps can be a little better.

The use of supplements is of great importance, because they can greatly reduce the duration of an outbreak as well as decrease the severity of the symptoms. The amino acid l-lysine is key. It suppresses the amino acid l-arginine, and an abundance of l-lysine over l-arginine can retard the growth of the herpes virus. It's not something that you should take every day, however, because l-arginine is an important factor in the creation of white blood cells. Other supplements that are highly beneficial to take during an outbreak are garlic (thanks to it's antiviral properties), echinacea, co-enzyme q-10, a multi-vitamin and mineral, red clover, myrrh, goldenseal, and cat's claw (particularly Uncaria Tomentosa). The latter you can find in tea or in tincture form, but you need to make sure it's the Uncaria Tomentosa, because the other kind (I forget what it's called) won't work. Red Marine Algae is another popular supplement that has yielded good results for many people. Other good herbs that you can make a tea out of are sarsaparilla, dandelion, and gentian, in equal parts. Licorice root tea is also a good and delicious one.

Essential oils can be effective if applied topically to an outbreak or to the base of the spine at the first signs of an outbreak. Simpler's makes a good one called Herp Aid. Another good one you can order online is H-Balm daily and H-Balm outbreak eliminator. Those work well, but it's kind of weird that you can slightly taste it in your mouth even though you're putting it on your crotch. I like these a lot, though, and they make you smell good, too. It may seem a little embarrassing to take some of the more obvious supplements through the checkout line, but just remember, you're a punk and people think you're a fucking freak anyway. And if you get busted for trying to shoplift it, you can probably make them feel real bad if you act embarrassed about the fact that you can't afford medicine for your herpes. Maybe they'll give it to you anyway. It's been known to happen. If you're lucky, the secret shopper dude might randomly show you a picture of another shoplifter with a big smile on his face who happens to be your friend, Randy. If that happens you'll really feel a lot better for getting yourself busted. Try not to laugh out loud, though—it won't help your situation.

I've tried a million things over the years, and sometimes they work for a while, and then later on they stop being as effective. If you're like me and you wanna go the natural route, or if you're just broke as hell, then you might be happy to know about the inexpensive product that you may already have in your bathroom: hydrogen peroxide. Just put it in a spray bottle and spray it on your genital region at the first signs of an outbreak. You can see if the virus is on your skin because it'll start bubbling up like it does when you use it to clean out a cut on your finger. The use of hydrogen peroxide and another cheap supplement called DMSO is called hyper-oxygenation—the theory is that viruses can't live in an environment that's full of oxygen. So if you just keep adding oxygen to the affected areas and to the base of your spine, where the virus lives, then you can quickly stop an outbreak before it starts. The hydrogen peroxide could cause your body to detoxify too quickly, however, and you could get an outbreak instead of preventing one. If that happens, then only use it occasionally in the spray bottle, and try the same thing with just the DMSO.

You can buy DMSO at the health food store for around $10. It's a byproduct of wood pulp and is extremely powerful stuff. It's pretty great for getting rid of outbreaks and is good for arthritis and other shit, too. So once again, here's the protocol in full. At the first signs of an outbreak, dab DMSO on your lower back at the base of your spine and every place you've ever had an outbreak every few hours, about five times a day for three days or so, until the signs disappear. Supposedly, if you follow this procedure once or twice a month for five months, maybe longer, then you'll never have an outbreak again. My friend does this and she's only had her initial outbreak. Like me, she has a giant turd for an immune system, so maybe it really works. It's worth a shot. There's also a DMSO roll-on for people with oral herpes. You pretty much follow the same instructions as the other one except that you also get DMSO cream and apply it liberally to the back of your neck. It lives up there if you have oral, facial or ocular herpes. It's extremely strong and if you decide to use it, it's very important to make sure that your skin is clean first. No using lotions or any kind of chemicals before and for awhile after applying DMSO, because it'll draw whatever's on your skin and take it straight into your system. Another important thing to know is *don't rub it into your skin.* Just dab it on. I made the mistake of rubbing it into the base of my spine a few times and now when I put it there it burns and my

skin turns red and I get welts. I read that this uncomfortable side effect isn't a big deal, it's just painful, but my acupuncturist told me not to use it anymore. Luckily I never rubbed it into my genital region, only dabbed, and haven't had an unpleasant reaction down there. I'm gonna quit using it anyway though. But it is definitely worth a shot. A lot of people have supposedly followed this procedure and never had an outbreak again.

Other important things to do are get lots of rest, keep the area in question clean and dry, and wear cotton underwear. Also, if you touch a herpes blister, wash your hands before touching anything else. Or if you're female and you wanna wipe yourself after you pee, be very careful. You can spread this shit with toilet paper to other parts of your sensitive skin. If you get it in your eye, go see a doctor immediately. I think it can damage your cornea and, worst-case scenario, you could go blind or have serious brain damage.

Diet, too, is a pretty crucial part. Again, this is only if you have a shitty immune system. Plenty of people with herpes eat whatever the fuck they want whenever they want and rarely have outbreaks. Fuck them. No, but seriously, if you're a big peanut lover, you're gonna be bummed to find out that all nuts and seeds are bad for people with herpes—with the exception of flax seeds. And peanuts are the absolute worst! Like if I'm eating at a restaurant and there are just a few crumbled peanuts on top of my food and my attempts at scraping every piece off are unsuccessful, I will definitely get an outbreak. From ingesting less than one fucking little peanut. A friend once told me that he stopped getting frequent outbreaks after giving up chocolate and peanut butter. He was a big liar and a junkie, but maybe it was true. Don't avoid nuts and seeds all the time or anything, but during an outbreak it is crucial not to ingest them because they're high in l-arginine, our enemy. Other foods that you need to avoid while you're having an outbreak are meat (if you eat it), oats, barley, corn, chocolate, coffee, sugar, and almost all fruits, including tomatoes and particularly any kind of citrus. Stay away from drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, too. All of these either contain l-arginine or weaken your immunity. Some people say to avoid coconut and avocados. Foods that are good to eat are spinach, mangoes, millet, and dulse (a type of seaweed). I've heard that dairy is both good and bad, so who the fuck knows about dairy.

The most important thing is to educate yourself, because different things work for different people, and you want to learn how to not give this awful virus to anyone else. Some good books to check out are *Healing With Whole Foods*, *Prescription for Nutritional Healing*, and *Never An Outbreak*. I'm sure there are tons of other good ones out there, so check your local library or bookstore. See what works best for you. And don't let anyone succeed in making you feel like you're a gross person because you have herpes. You're just unlucky, and soon enough everyone in the world's gonna have it anyway (but if you're careful it won't be because of you). *And always, always, always tell a potential partner that you have herpes before you have sex*. If you're well educated on the subject, you can most likely rid them of their worries. They'll probably respect you more for it. And if not, well, maybe they'll get the virus from some asshole who didn't warn them first and you can pass on your knowledge to them then. Or just tell them to fuck off and figure it out themselves.

Quick recap:

Don't have sex during first signs of an outbreak, all they way through to a couple days after last symptoms are gone. Always wash your hands if they come into contact with a blister during self-examination or topical application, etc. Condoms will not prevent contraction of the herpes virus.

Be up front with your sexual partners.

I'd be interested in sharing information with anyone.Feel free to get in touch:
que.oui@gmail.com

DIARY OF A BIOPSY BY MARISSA

February 24, 2008

I have a lump. In my right breast. I didn't even fucking notice it. The doctor found it. It's a size somewhere between an almond and a walnut and not really solid, but it's there. I'm not too worried about it. The doctor said to keep track of it and drink more water and less alcohol and caffeine. Cutting out caffeine probably won't be hard because I really don't do that anyhow, but cutting out alcohol probably will be. I keep thinking about how I always drink at shows now, and how that used to be an occasional thing. It reminds me of when I met an American burnout in Rome, and we started geeking out about going to punk shows and at some point I mentioned I never got drunk at shows. At the time my whole theory was that drinking and drugs were things you did when things were boring, but shows are never boring. I thought the idea of being wasted at shows all the time like that was dumb. Whoops.

I don't know how I'm going to keep track of the lump—I can never find it. It's so amorphous that when the doctor initially found it, she had some other person try to find it too. It was weird to have a bunch of different people feeling my boob. But whatever, I guess. It's slightly stressful but not really. I'm supposed to come back in six weeks.

April 30, 2008

Still there. Still the same. I still can't find it by myself. I am supposed to be checking it regularly this whole time, but…I can't even find the lump half the time, how am I supposed to track it? Anyways, it's still there, so now I have to get it looked at. Like mammogram style looked at. I saw a news report years ago about how they had made a new type of mammogram machine that didn't involve trying to get yr. boob squished in between plates of glass. You just had to put it in like a hole or something; I think it was some form of MRI.

They're going to have me go through a program called Sister-to-Sister so I won't have to pay for any of it, which is really awesome. That's one of the reasons I like Lyon-Martin, because even though the wait is kind of long for an appointment they always make sure to get you to go through every program possible to make things mega-cheap or free. The first time I went there they gave me this card that makes all your birth control totally free of charge.

May 19, 2008

Getting the fucking mammogram appointment is a fucking pain. They call with a date and a time and if you can't make it rescheduling requires calling like five different fucking people who are all really busy and hard to reach. Fuck.

I still haven't told my mom.

June 15, 2008

I went to the breast health center in some bullshit, rich part of town. It was a total thrash getting there. I managed to get on the bus that didn't even get halfway to where I was going before the driver was like, "This is the last stop." I ended up jumping on a myriad of different buses and running up a hill and arriving just barely on time. I had to fill out a ton of forms and wait in a room that was carpeted with this circle pattern that looked like boobs. The lamps looked like boobs too. I don't know if it was because I had breasts on the brain, or if breast centers actually do have a boob design theme. They called my name and took me to another room that had a bunch of ladies trying to calmly read those horrible women's magazines that seem to be a staple in doctors' offices. There were

these crappy little changing rooms and lockers to put all your clothes and stuff in. They handed me a key for a locker and a smock and told me I just needed to remove my top and my bra.

Gazillions of years later they called my name again and they put me in a dark cold room, so I could get an ultrasound before the mammogram. The ultrasound was weird—you always imagine ultrasound pictures as babies or something, because that's the dominant image associated with them, but this was just my boob, and it was mainly just fuzzy looking lines and dots. Next was the mammogram. As the nurse was having me stand in an awkward position to squeeze my breast flat in between two plates she asked if I was wearing any kind of deodorant. I told her no and she mumbled "good" as she squeezed down the plates. It felt like any movement I made would rip off my boob and I started thinking about when I tried to get laser eye surgery, (I was rejected) and a friend didn't want me to, for fear that there would be an earthquake while they were lazer-ing my eye. What if there was an earthquake? Would my boob just tear away? Could it just tear away?

In the end, both the ultra sound and the mammogram didn't show much except that the lump had "undefined" borders, which can also equal cancer. I was recommended for a biopsy. I was starting to really freak out about the whole thing, because every step of the way, from finding the lump up until now, every nurse and doctor, and whoever else has been around has just said, "I'm sure it's nothing, we just need to double-check." You start thinking its bullshit after about the fifth time of hearing it.

I walked out of the office and wandered down the street searching for a bus stop with a familiar line. I called my mom, but she was busy. No matter where she is or what she's doing she always asks if something's wrong when I call her. I told her it wasn't exactly good news but I wouldn't really call it bad news either. It's just a thing.

July 27, 2008

The process for making a biopsy appointment is about the same as the mammogram appointment. Get a call with a date and time. Doesn't work. Play phone tag with like five people. Finally get an appointment. Oh, and the lump is easily findable now. Like I can just point right to it without even looking for it.

August 21, 2008

I went and had another evaluation. It wasn't really clear what the appointment was for when I made it, so when I arrived I wasn't sure if I would be talking about my options or having a needle stuck in me. I checked in and immediately ran to the bathroom and started sobbing. It was weird and unexpected. I mean, I was feeling a little out of sorts because it seemed like I had gotten pretty far in the testing process and every step of the way everyone kept insisting that it was probably nothing, that they just wanted to double-check one more thing.

I pulled myself together and returned to the waiting room, mindlessly flipping through a ragged copy of *Women's Day* or something. I got called in and got a smock to put on. I sat on the medical table, spacing out, when all of a sudden the doctor arrived. No knock. And it was a dude. And really, how does a dude decide to be a boob doctor? How does a dude decide to deal with, and care for a part he doesn't really have? I don't know, but having some old dude doctor feel my boob was really awkward. Not only are you trying to keep calm in a stressful situation, but also then you have to act like it's totally normal that some old dude is feeling you. He didn't say anything the whole time he was doing the feel test, and yet another ultrasound. Again—I have undefined borders. He said I had two options, do a needle aspiration biopsy or have a lumpectomy.

What. The. Fuck.

Seriously, hearing the word "lumpectomy" I almost fully burst into tears. I held it together. Barely. He recommended the biopsy. Duh. I went out to the receptionist and started crying before I could finish making the appointment. She attempted to calm me down by again reminding me that it's probably nothing, and that it would be unusual for a woman my age with no family history of the disease to have cancer, and here's the doctors cell phone number, and don't worry the doctor has daughters about your age. The last part, the daughters part—not comforting at all. Kind of creepy.

I returned to the bathroom to calm down and then attempted to go about the rest of the day in a normal fashion. Drop off mail, pick up groceries, blah blah. The second I was home it all hit again and found myself sobbing. Tried to call my mom. No response. Getting hysterical. I called my sister, she kind of fixed things, then I talked to my mom and she said she'd come with me to the biopsy. I still keep having intense crying jags about it.

August 25, 2008

Finally the appointment rolls around. Again he came into the room without knocking and then was strangely brisk and casual about everything, which is weird when you're getting tested for a *deadly disease*. First came all the numbing stuff, which actually kind of stung. He wasn't really saying what he was doing, and at some point I glanced over and saw a fucking scalpel headed towards my breast and I fucking freaked out. There was this gigantic needle gun thing, and it did this click-clunk thing that I could kind of feel, to take samples of the lump. I felt blood dripping down my side and I was squeezing the life out of my mom's hand. I started sobbing again, but really I was afraid to move or even really breath at all, fearing it would make the doctor slip or something. I could still feel the blood dripping down my side, and now it was starting to pool under my back.

The doctor finished by putting some kind of chemical tag thing in the lump to let future nurses doing mammograms know that the lump had already been biopsied, which kind of weirded me out because it implies that it's not possible for that lump to turn into cancer at some point. I mean it's a fact that it won't, but it doesn't make sense to me that a lump of something could be sitting around inside of you and it won't mutate eventually. The doctor quickly cleaned up the blood, so I wouldn't see it, and went off to get an icepack without closing the door behind him. I found myself trying to cover up my bloody boob while staring into a hallway. He returned with the ice, handed it to me and went about his way, closing the door this time. He let me know that he would get the results within 48 hours. We went home shaky.

August 26, 2008

I stayed at my parent's house for a bit, lying around and watching Oprah. A little sore but really nothing too bad. There is a big greenish-purple bruise that runs the length of the bottom of my boob, and then a half-inch scab where the incision was.

August 27, 2008

The phone message went like this: "Hi, Marissa, this is Dr. Hiler, you wanna call me back at (some number)… OK, thanks bye. Everything's fine, by the way. OK, bye."

EPILOGUE:

I wanted this to end with the bizarre phone call telling me I didn't have cancer, but the story really didn't. About a month later I received a bill for over $1,000, and this is after I told them I had insurance. Basically, even though I have insurance, they didn't really pay any of it. At all. The insurance was useless in this situation and the process of qualifying and getting medical insurance in the first place was a ridiculous joke too. It took me six months, three different companies and mountains of paperwork to get accepted, then monthly fees totaling over $200, and then they don't even pay for a fucking biopsy? Totally useless. And none of these people really know my financial situation. The doctors and the insurance have no clue whether I have savings to pay for this, or if I can call my mom, or if I have a steady job, or any kind of fallback plan at all. It's disgusting. I freaked out and called Lyon Martin to see if Sister-to-Sister would pay for the biopsy, and luckily they did. So I wasn't totally screwed, but still, it's incredibly lame and disgusting that there is an absolute need for charity programs in order for people to pay for preventative health and diagnostics. It should be a fucking given that everyone's health is taken care of. Not just the wealthy. Thank you Lyon Martin and Sister-to-Sister, for taking care of me and so many others.

NOLA

Greg Harvester

A few years ago, I was living in New Orleans and working as a pizza delivery guy making four bucks an hour, plus tips. One night, on my way home, two guys held me up at gunpoint, demanding all of my money and my bike. They were just as nervous and shaky as I was, but they had an advantage—they had a gun pressed against my right cheek. I gave them my measly sixty bucks (most of which I stole from my job anyway) and started to get off of my bike. The next thing I know, there's a loud ringing in my ears, I'm laying on the ground, and the two guys are running down the street. They had shot me in the face and I was thinking that I was going to die right there in the middle of the street. I yelled and screamed for help, but no one came. Then I went into shock, jumped on my bike, and rode eight blocks to my friend Sarah's house. There was blood streaming down my face and all over my body.

When I collapsed inside Sarah's door, she offered to call an ambulance, but I was afraid that I would die before they got there. I was also afraid that I would have to pay their bill if I lived. Sarah and her housemates put me in their truck and ran every red light between there and Charity Hospital.

Once I was stable and on heavy drugs, the hazy reality of the situation started to hit me. The hospital had my real name and social security number! Was I going to have to actually *pay* for drugs, reconstructive surgery, follow-up visits, and simply staying at the hospital? I laid there in the moldy hospital room with my eyes crusted shut with dried blood and imagined myself writing checks to Charity Hospital at the age of 75. I was scared shitless. Luckily, my friends drove me to the *Charity* Hospital, and due to my finances (no insurance, below-minimum-wage job, on welfare, etc.), all of my medical fees were waived. I thought this was a great thing (and it was), but I soon found out that free care amounts to inferior services. The doctors would poke and prod at me like an inanimate object and not give me any information. When I would ask a physician about the constant ringing in my ears or different internal pains and discomforts, they would shrug it off and tell me I was fine. The doctors kept scheduling for surgery and would cancel on me after I fasted for up to eighteen hours and sat around in a waiting room all day. I started taking more meds than I was supposed to, just so I wouldn't have to dwell on the fact that my face would probably fall apart before the doctors would fix it. The whole experience left me depressed, sickened, and vaguely suicidal.

Besides all of this, I had no clue how I was going to buy food or cover my basic expenses. That's where the punks helped me out. Friends all over the country set up benefit shows, auctions, and other kinds of moneymaking schemes to help me out. People that I didn't even know were helping me out and sending me stuff when I really needed it the most. I can't even begin to describe how grateful and thankful I was (and still am) for every single person who donated money, auctioned something, set up the PA at a benefit, played in any of the bands, or simply mailed me a letter during that time. It was the closest thing that I had to any sort of mental health services. The support that I felt from friends and the punk community is what really kept me sane.

Also, I felt incredibly guilty. I felt guilty because I knew that people were helping me out because I've toured all over the country in punk bands for the past fifteen years. I'm privileged and lucky to have friends in every single US state and all over the world.. It made me think about underprivileged people all over the world who aren't as lucky as I am…people who die in the streets or in hospital beds every day because of lack of funds, support, or any other thousands of reasons.

Year after year, people that I know get sick and can't afford medication. Sometimes, they get better. Other times, they get worse, and sometimes, they die. No amount of benefit shows, bake sales, or donations can carry all of the punks into old age. So, what do we do? What happens to those of us that don't have insurance when some major shit goes down? Are we fucked?! Honestly, I don't have any real answers for you. It's been four years since I got shot and I still don't have insurance or any systems in place if something bad happens to me again. I'm pretty sure that I'll end up in a medical facility again one day due to an accident or post-traumatic stress. For now, I keep moving forward carefully, with my fingers crossed.

Endnotes:

1. My heart goes out to Helen Hill, Andriy Kolyada, Lance Hahn, and Brian Turd. RIP.
2. I have few issues left of my zine, *Rice Harvester*, which has more about this assault in New Orleans. If you'd like a copy of it, send me two bucks. I'll have a new issue out sometime in 2009. Write to me about anything. PO Box 40786, SF, CA 94140.

Rotten Ron, Blood Sucker.

My name is Rotten Ron and I suck blood for a living. Technically, I'm a phlebotomist; my official job title is Donor Technician. I work for the local blood bank where I collect blood from donors to supply the hospitals in the area. Definitely a job I'd never imagined I'd be doing, especially in my forties. Going through some bad times, I ended up going to one of those rip-off schools you see on daytime TV. You know the ones—"Need a career? You're a fuckup. Get a life. Give us your money." Not the wisest choice, but I made the best of it and got hired right out of school as a bloodsucker.

On the days when I'm really loving my job, it feels kind of like a traveling circus. A circus of blood! These are the mobile blood drives where a crew of us will travel to various locations to collect blood. These can be places such as offices, lodges, churches, or high schools, to more interesting places like San Quentin Prison (we take blood from the guards, not inmates, and I got a tour once. Scary!). and a big comic book convention where I took blood from a wide assortment of comic and sci-fi characters like Boba Fett. We will take over a conference room, auditorium, gymnasium, or just about any available space, set up our gear, and start draining our willing victims. When no rooms are available, we bust out one of the converted buses or "bloodmobiles" that can be parked just about anywhere. They are self-contained medical clinics with four or five beds and built-in equipment. Donors make appointments or just drop in and are processed and bled. The collected units are packed into picnic coolers to be taken back to the lab, the gear is cleaned and repacked, and it's off to somewhere else the next day.

As far as being a tattooed punk there, I definitely feel like an outsider. There are zero other punks working that I've met, but there are tons of interesting characters. Most of the people I work with are a little off in some way, which I love. Everyone is pretty much accepting; once they see you are a hard worker and good at what you do, they don't give a fuck what you look like.

Do punks give blood? Pretty rarely, that I've come across. Every once in a while someone will recognize the Flipper tattoo on my hand. It'll usually be a person I wouldn't expect in some square office out in the burbs, making it seem like a closeted secret from their past which makes me happy.

This brings me to the stuff I hate about my job and the blood business. Much of the reason I think I don't see too many punks at the bloodbank is the extensive questionnaire that would probably knockout a good percentage of them. I'm all for safety in the blood supply, and ignorance in the past did result in many getting terminally ill in the '70s and early '80s from transfusions, but some of the questions are over the top.

No tattoos for 12 months prior to blood donation. Many people I talk to think you can't give blood at all if you are tattooed. The FDA doesn't consider tattooing regulated enough, so you have to wait 12 months to be considered disease-free. No IV drug use, even it was just once and you used precautions. Jail or any lockup for more than 72 hours in the past 12 months will knock you out. Any instance of receiving cash or drugs for

sex since 1977 will 86 you, even though many sex workers are tested regularly because it's their job. If you are a man who has had sex even once with another man since 1977, you are permanently banned from donating blood, unless you were a victim of rape. This seems like absurd, out-and-out discrimination to me. Many gay and bisexual men are *way* more health-conscious than some of the sleazy straight men and teenage boys we willingly take blood from. Also, if you are a woman with a boyfriend that experimented sexually with another man once since '77, forget about coming in unless you dump him for 12 months.

It is often my job to inform these people who come in feeling happy that they're doing something good for the community that we have to deny them. It makes me feel like total shit and I take extra time to explain that I don't agree with the system.

Another thing that bugs me is that often the biggest turnout of donors will be the worst, rich, conservative whiteys, who turn out in droves. They are the rudest, most demanding assholes; and think they deserve the world for giving a little of their time and blood. I like to think of their blood going to save a junkie, trannie hooker, a gang member, or even a punk rocker.

Should punks give blood? Absolutely. Do I think you should lie on the questionnaire? I probably shouldn't answer that, but just ask yourself—would you feel comfortable and safe enough giving your blood to your relative, lover, or closest friend? The blood is thoroughly tested, but there is always the remotest chance that something could slip by.

Healthcare?

By Joe Mullin

Back in 1988 when I joined my first band and started going to shows I didn't have many health concerns. Of course I would get a cold or get banged up skating and whatnot, but other than my own neurotic hypochondriac thoughts I was in damn good shape. 20 years later, at the age of 36, I have high blood pressure, tinnitus, and the beginnings of arthritis. I also take medication daily for anxiety and panic disorders, which were diagnosed in 1997, and led to me being put in a mental ward for 32 days. I have begun having colonoscopies, and I will soon have to go to the doctor for prostrate exams in addition to other age-related concerns are coming up over the horizon.

Two years ago I began schooling to become a registered nurse. I had been a graphic designer for over a decade and a printer for years before that. But I was feeling like I wasn't giving enough to the other members of society, and I was just plain tired of being a designer. I did a reevaluation of my life and looked into what I could do to make a bigger difference. I came upon nursing, due to my fascination with anatomy and physiology, and also because of my knowledge of disease processes from being a hypochondriac years earlier. Either way, I have found my niche and in twelve months I should be taking my boards to become an RN.

Going back to school I have found that many of the problems facing people's health can be avoided or at least cut off at the pass through early detection or prevention. Having been a punk I know the leeriness of those in the counterculture to put trust into the health care industry or in any institution. Yeah, there are some fucked-up issues out there, but there are also programs set up to help you get the proper care if you have a condition, disease, or injury, and other programs to get you the screening procedures you need to have done to avoid health problems in the future.

The first thing to know is that you can go into any emergency department in any hospital in the United States and they must see and treat you. According to the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act the hospital must give you treatment or send you to another facility that is able to do so. You will get a bill, but there are programs set up that will charge you costs on a sliding scale, or have you pay a minimum each month ($10 usually) or request the hospital write off your bill as indigent care.

There are also free clinics and places that will charge on a sliding scale according to your ability to pay. I haven't seen many free clinics outside of large cities, but even some of the smallest towns have doctors that will cut you a deal if you ask for it. Explain your situation, and if you can pay them, please do. Don't run out of the offer you get, because that may be just enough to burn the doctor so that he doesn't offer anyone a discount ever again. Yes, health care is insanely overpriced. Believe me, I know, but if you want to cheat the system completely then you aren't helping anyone aside from yourself. It just provides proof to those who say that universal health care will not work. It might not be very punk, but it is ethical.

Another thing to look into is screenings at community health fairs for disorders like high blood pressure, diabetes, or other easily detectible and preventable problems. The hospital I work for has a big one every year. These are completely free and usually have people that offer assistance if you are found to have a condition or a need for further tests.

This is just a short and sweet list of places you can go and things you can do. There are many programs out there to help. The best place to look is online or at your local health department. To be honest, you aren't going to get the care that someone with full-blown insurance will, but if you can deal with a few jerks out there that you may run into then you can find the care you need. Do not put it off if you have a problem or think you have one, putting up with jumping through hoops may save your life. But until this country gets its shit together and learns how to take care of everyone like it should, it's all you can do.

I have PKD.

By Krista Ciminera

I have PKD. It is genetic, life threatening, and incurable. I inherited it from my father. There's a 50% chance of inheriting it. My brother has it too. So did my aunt. PKD is a gene mutation where sometimes, instead of a new kidney cell forming, a cyst forms instead. These cysts grow over time and end up absorbing the kidney cells around them. Most people with PKD will have their kidneys fail at some point in their lives. When this happens, the only treatments are dialysis, which is a way of cleaning the blood through the help of a machine, or transplantation. Along with this disease comes other illnesses, such as aneurysms, mitral valve prolapse, increased risk of heart disease, cancer, and strokes, and polycystic liver disease.

It was my choice to find out my status. I wasn't experiencing any symptoms, I just decided that I wanted to find out whether or not I had it. To find out, you need to get a sonogram of your kidneys to determine whether or not there are any cysts.

***

I am riding my bike to Bellevue Hospital to get a sonogram, up First Avenue on a dirty New York summer day. There is no bicycle parking at the hospital, and in my head I make a bad Jerry Seinfeld-esque joke, something like, "Of course there's no bike parking at the hospital. If you can ride your bike to the hospital, you don't need to be there." Inside the hospital, I find the waiting room and wait to be seen.

The room where I get my sonogram is dim. I enter sheepishly, trying to hold the gown I'm asked to wear closed at the back. There is a small, thin bed alongside the wall, and a woman, the technician, sits next to it in front of a monitor. "Lay down on your side," she says. The lights are off. Grey sunlight comes in sideways through the only window, stretching and elongating across the walls. It's dim—dim like I'm home again and too sick to go to school and my mother is taking care of me. I lie down on the bed, face the wall, and think about my mother coming into check on me while the woman is preparing the machine. She places her hands on my back and begins to rub rhythmically. I imagine it's my mother's hands rubbing my back; the hands that soothed the fever out of me as a child and made the bad things go away. But it's not. It is a stranger in a sterile grey, dead and dull room, looking into a part of me that I could never see. Someone just doing their job.

She does this for a few more minutes and then, abruptly, she stops and gets up. "You're done. You can get dressed now," she says, like I've taken part in some sort of seedy exchange. "You'll get the results soon." She leaves the room, and I'm alone.

***

My father sits in a recliner in front of a TV with the dialysis machine to his right. A wooden chair sits in between so that one could see all of these at once. A single window fills the room with cool fading sunlight, disappearing behind the houses as my father's night on dialysis begins. Two tubes in his right arm connect my father to the machine—one so that blood can leave, and the other so that it can return. He does this three nights a week, for six hours at a time so that his blood can be cleaned. All of the tubes, blinking lights and locomotion of the machine are for one single purpose; to bring his blood to the thin cylinder that acts as an artificial kidney.

He does this for eight years. I am anywhere from two to ten years old. My sister and I spend a lot of time here, simply called "the dialysis room," which used to be my brother's bedroom before him and my other brother started sharing a room. We make games using the assortment of supplies that can be found here: the blood pressure cuff, the standing scale, the centrifuge. These are our playthings and for the moment, while my father sits and waits out another night, we are oblivious to their meanings.

***

I'm eight years old and the phone rings as I'm eating dinner in the kitchen with my mom, brothers, and sister. Dad is in the dialysis room eating dinner alone. He's on the waiting list to receive a transplant. It's already been a year and a half. Upon the first ring, my mother tenses, holds her breath, and shoots my brother Greg an awful, menacing look. For the past two weeks, we'd been receiving prank phone calls from the same person. He speaks gibberish, curses and says lewd things, and sometimes says nothing at all. My mother's convinced it's one of my brother's high school friends, since he admitted that he and several friends had prank-called another friend about a month ago.

It rings several times before she gets up to answer, and she spits out a bitter "hello" as she holds the receiver to her mouth. She doesn't say anything for a few seconds, she's just listening, and then she explodes, screaming, "Why are you doing this? Don't you understand that every time the phone rings in this house, I think it's a call from the hospital to tell me that they've found a kidney for my husband? Just leave us alone, please." She slams the phone onto the hook and collapses, sobbing, onto the countertop. My brothers and sister and I are frozen, backs against our chairs, our eyes wide as we look at each other, at her, and our mouths are open like we're going to say something, but we don't. After a minute, she goes to her bedroom without looking at us.

My brothers, the oldest, seem to know something that I can't understand. My sister and I are scared because mom never cries. None of us says anything. We gather the dirty dishes and then turn on the TV. Mom doesn't make an appearance for the rest of the night, and our house never receives another prank call again.

***

I'm ten years old and my parents have just left to go to Boston in a flurry of suitcases and phone calls. They have a kidney for my father. My Aunt Mary, who is my father's sister and got her own transplant a few years before, comes over to take care of us. Apparently, she has been given permission to spoil us for the next week, so we stay home from school, watch rented movies, and eat whipped cream out of the can. I'm happy. Everyone else is happy. And after two weeks, dad comes home. We wait at the window all day, and finally the car drives up. We gather around the door, shouting and jumping, and they walk in, my mother supporting my father. As we run to him my mom puts a hand out and says sternly, "Be careful. Don't touch him." I recoil in a kind of fear as they slowly walk the steps to their bedroom, because I've always been able to touch my father.

***

I'm fourteen and at the hospital. My father is coming out of a six hour surgery to clip an aneurysm that was found in his brain. The aneurysm is an effect of having PKD, although my parents won't tell us that for many years. Outside of the recovery room, I'm gripping a get-well card that I made by hand and had everyone sign. My mom and I are allowed to see him, and he is barely conscious. I hand him the card in his left hand as my mother grips his right. "What's this?" he says, and drops the card to the ground. I bend to pick it up and when I stand again, my mother is squeezing his hand with

both of hers. Shaking her head with her lips closed tight, she begins to cry and says, "Longest day of my life, Victor. Longest day of my life."

***

I'm sixteen and my Aunt Mary is in the hospital because she's feeling pains in her abdomen. My parents say that she'll be fine and out in a few days. But after a few days, my father comes home from the hospital, and I can sense that something's wrong. "I don't think she's going to come out of the hospital," he says to us later that night. Her transplanted kidney failed and her body wasn't taking to the dialysis. While she's still conscious, my father asks if she would like to see us, the kids, and she tells him no. "You wouldn't want to see her anyway, not the way she looks now," my father says. And after ten days in the hospital, my aunt, who never had a partner or any children and loved us like her own, dies at the age of fifty-four.

***

It's been almost a month since my sonogram. "So I have the report right here in front of me," my nephrologist says over the phone. "And it looks as though you've got cysts in both your kidneys." I had been sitting lazily in my chair, doodling on a piece of paper, but now I am upright, the pen poised in mid air. I believe I've misheard her and say, "What?"

"You have Polycystic Kidney Disease. Did you know that?" she asks.

"Well, no," I say. And somehow I stay on the phone for another minute, tell her I will come see her this week, and hang up. I walk out into the living room, and for a moment there is stillness, like a calm before a storm, like I'm suspended in time, refusing to move forward with this new information. But then, it is upon me and I fall to the ground, the greatest falling down of my life. I am shattered, the glass that separated me from my father's existence is no longer there, and as I clutch my stomach and make painful, sobbing sounds, I am catapulted through memory and meaning. I relive my youth, except I am my father in the dialysis chair as my children crawl around unknowingly, I live in a house that is about to crack under the weight of my fragile mortality, I am in the hospital, I am in the hospital again, and again, and I am dead.

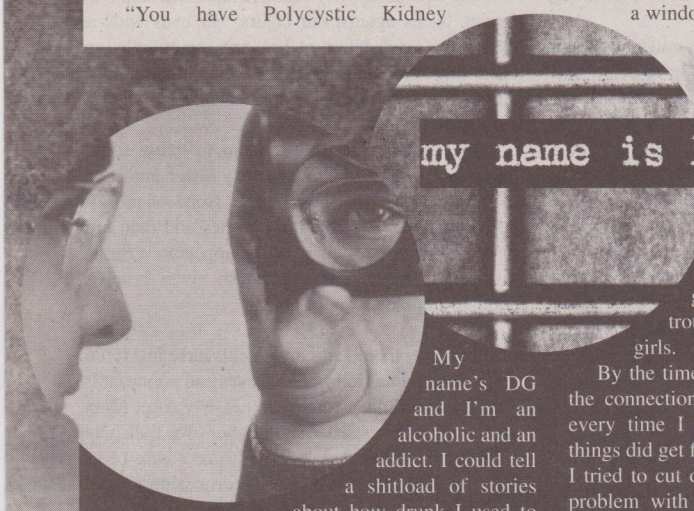
***

After exhausting myself for an hour I try to find composure so that I can call my parents to tell them that their daughter has a disease.

James Baldwin once wrote, "Some people look at you like you've farted when you try to tell them the truth," and I felt the weight of these words as I began to tell people about my diagnosis. It is a topic that stunk up the room with its magnitude and awkwardness. And in an attempt to clear the air, or open a window, many people fell short of what I would call providing positive support. Perhaps because I'm young, because there are no outward symptoms, or just because I am a friend, I suddenly found myself defending the severity of my disease. I am told that I will be OK, that everyone will get sick, and that everyone's going to need health insurance at some point. I am reassured that there will be a cure: a thoughtless and meaningless word that resonates in my head like a bad promise.

And I feel powerless, powerless to explain the complexities of my disease, the feelings that come with the complete and sudden change of my life's narrative, and the guilt I feel in holding onto the anger and fear that feels natural for me at this moment. I feel alone, back up against the wall and pleading, "Wait, you don't understand." Because how do I begin to describe living with PKD if I am not heard in the first place? How can I begin a discussion of illness if it is dismissed with reassurances before it's even begun?

Not everyone is going to be OK. This is a truth. Only when we accept this truth will we be able to discuss disease in a way that is constructive, helpful, and healing. And in this way, we will be able to expand the ways in which these conversations and interactions can be incorporated into our lives and learn to grow with the people that we wish to care about, instead of apart from them.



my name is DG, and I'm an Alchoholic.

My name's DG and I'm an alcoholic and an addict. I could tell a shitload of stories about how drunk I used to get and all that, but most of them don't have anything to do with what makes me an alcoholic. When it comes down to whether or not I'm a "real" alcoholic, there are really only two things that count. Number one: the more I drink, the more I want. And number two: no matter how much my drinking fucks up my life, left to my own devices, I'll always pick up again. There have been a lot of symptoms and warning signs along the way, but what it really comes down to is that when I drink I get an insatiable craving for more alcohol, and while I can quit on my own (at least for a while), I can't stay quit.

I started drinking when I was about thirteen or fourteen. I can't remember my age, but I remember my first drink—rum and coke, stolen from the liquor store across the street from the arcade. It was golden. Even though I ended up puking all over the house and woke up the next morning naked on the family room floor, hung like a savior, it was still one of the best experiences of my life. I will never forget it—the warmth of the alcohol going down, the immediate feeling of relief. Better than any orgasm.

By sixteen, I was one of those drunks who could drink, puke, pass out, and wake up two hours later to keep drinking. I made my first alcohol-related trip to the hospital by age seventeen, and by the age of eighteen had tried every drug besides heroin I could get my hands on. Trouble with school, trouble with the police, trouble with girls.

By the time I turned 26, I was starting to make the connection. It wasn't that I fucked things up every time I got drunk—it's just that whenever things did get fucked up, I was drunk at the time. So I tried to cut down on my drinking. But, there's a problem with that. Alcoholics aren't like normal people. When I'm hungry I eat, and then I get full and then I stop eating. When I start drinking I want more, and the more I drink the more I want. I could have one beer without totally losing control, but that one beer would make me wish I had another. It was like having to piss—a nagging physical discomfort. So, I'd have another, and for a minute that nagging sensation would be gone. But, then it would come back even worse. I could never get enough.

It took me years to figure it out. I would go on the wagon, but after a few weeks or months, I'd figure I could have one drink. Just a beer while I'm watching the sunset or some such bullshit. Most of the time, as soon as that first beer went down, I'd totally forget that I wasn't supposed to be drinking anymore and I'd be off on a bender. If I was lucky, I'd be able to keep it to a beer or two a night for as long as a week before I'd be off on a tear. After a few years of this, I finally got the picture that I couldn't drink at all. I took a trip through California one summer and had one beer my first night out. By the second night, I was drinking all the time, and by the fourth or fifth night I came close to drunkenly cutting someone's throat at a party. It scared the shit out of me, and I tried to quit for good.

My friends helped me stay sober for a while, but I couldn't keep it up. If I ever had enough time alone, I'd drink. If I went on a trip, I'd lock myself in a motel room and drink. After I got married, if my wife left on a trip, I'd lock myself in the house with the shades drawn, getting drunk. That's exactly what I did Thanksgiving of 2002, as a matter of fact. My wife went to California to care for my dying grandfather; I stayed home with "the flu." And drank.

To make a long story short, by the following summer she had become my ex-wife, and I found myself living alone again for the first time in years. I had a beer one night. Nothing happened, so a week or so later, I had a couple shots at a bar with a beer back. Still no Armageddon, but the tickle was there. A couple of weeks later, I couldn't sleep, so I ran down to the store for a beer. By the time I finished, it was past 2:30. But the urge was there, and strong. So, I dug out some prescription sleeping meds, some mouthwash, some Nyquil, and some cough syrup and tried to figure out how many pills and how much mouthwash/Nyquil/cough syrup I needed in order to get as absolutely fucked up as possible without actually slipping into a coma.

I saw myself in the bathroom mirror and I suddenly realized that I was totally and completely fucked. Game over. After almost ten years of trying to control my drinking, it suddenly occurred to me that I would never, ever, ever be able to handle this shit on my own. Sooner or later I would always find an excuse to have one drink, and after that it was only a matter of time before I would be willing to put absolutely anything into my system to get high.

This firsthand experience with my own addiction is what has led me to believe in what some people refer to as the "disease model" of alcoholism. According to this model, my alcoholism is based in

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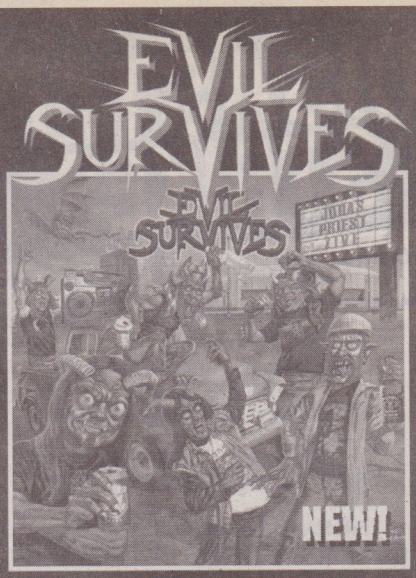

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biology and has a strong genetic component. One of the first doctors to subscribe to this model, Dr. William Silkworth, likened this disease to an allergy. He was writing about alcoholism in the 1930s, though, and we've learned a lot about both allergies and addiction since then. While an allergy comes from the body reacting as if non-threatening agents are threats, by producing histamines, alcoholism is more of a sensitivity. As far as I know, no one knows exactly how this sensitivity works, but researchers seem to have found a connection between alcoholism and a weakness in certain proteins involved with experiencing pleasure. As those proteins continue to weaken over time, the alcoholic (or addict) needs more alcohol (or heroin or whatnot) to experience pleasure. There is a genetic component, in that some people are born with these weakened proteins, but at the same time a heavy drinker can "catch" alcoholism because chronic alcohol use adds to their weakened state.

Before you write a bunch of letters telling me I'm wrong or whatever, let me just say that the above is just my layman's understanding of the chemistry behind alcoholism. Whether or not I have a great grasp of the science involved is moot. The basic point is still true—my alcoholism is a disease, and as such it is something I cannot ever change by willpower or self-control. It has been with me since my first drink and it'll be with me until I die.

The eight or nine years I spent trying to stay sober on my own were pretty hellish. When you're used to drinking nearly every day, life can be weird without alcohol. For over fifteen years my emotions had been filtered through a stream of alcohol, and I was suddenly aware of feelings I'd never known existed. At the age of 30, I had never had a "first kiss" with someone where both of us were sober. My relationships started with drunken sex and developed from there. I had never gone to shows sober. I didn't know how to dance or have fun without drinking. Without a good buzz, I didn't even know how to carry on a normal conversation without feeling anxious, and for a good couple years I had a hard time staying at shows for more than fifteen or twenty minutes at a stretch without freaking out and having to leave. It also didn't help that most of my friends just stopped calling after a while. Basically, for an alcoholic like me, life can be pretty bad when you're drinking, but it can get even worse once you stop. So when I got sober a little over five years ago, I reached out for help because I knew that my biggest problem wasn't just quitting drinking and staying quit. My biggest problem was finding a way of living sober so that I wouldn't end up throwing myself off a bridge.

I was fortunate enough to find my way into AA and finding other alcoholics waiting there for me. There are a lot of other ways to stay sober—acupuncture, SMART recovery, aversion therapy, hypnotism. I haven't tried them and can't comment on them. All I know is that AA has worked for me. It can be difficult for me to talk about AA to people who are outside the program, because I've run up against a lot of folks with misconceptions and prejudices. I'm also wary of "speaking for AA" as it is full of people with very diverse views and beliefs. But for those of you who have never gotten the scoop or known someone who's a member (Anyone? Buehler?), here are the basics.

AA is based on the idea that we are powerless over alcohol and that once we have become alcoholic, we will never be able to safely drink again. Our alcoholism also gets worse over time, leading eventually to jail, institutions, or death. We believe that the only thing that can keep us safe from our alcoholism is to have a "spiritual awakening" or spiritual experience and to then maintain a level of spiritual fitness, a process that occurs by going through the "twelve-step" process. If you're smarter than your average brick and know anything about twelve-step groups, you've probably noticed that I carefully sidestepped the word "God" in that description. And, if you ever walk into an AA meeting, chances are you're going to hear that word a lot. I'm not going to debate God or whether or not AA is a cult. I'll just say this: AA is about spirituality, not religion. For me, spirituality is about feeling part of and connected to the rest of the world, and developing that spirituality has kept me from having to take a drink for over five years now.

I'll end with this, if you're having a hard time with your drinking, don't ever let anyone else tell you that you're an alcoholic. Alcoholism can only be diagnosed from the inside. If you're worried that you might be an alcoholic, my suggestion is that you go drink. Try to have just one drink and then stop, and try to do that repeatedly for a few months. Or, try quitting completely for a year or so, if you can. For a normal person, life gets better if you've been drinking too much and you quit drinking. If you quit and your life suddenly turns to shit, you might just be one of us.

Dan: And what else?

Sarah: Currently nothing. I used to be involved in zines and band stuff, but not so much anymore. So how did punk influence your decision to go into health care?

Dan: I think it's been really hard to differentiate the values I've gotten from punk and the values I was raised with. I think for some people when they discover punk and get really into it, it's like a response to everything that feels wrong not only with the world but with their life at home. But I think with me the values I was exposed to at home were pretty congruent with the values I got through punk. It definitely was a really conscious decision when I was in school and figuring out what to do with myself. I thought there was a pretty clear distinction between careers that were oriented toward helping people versus careers that were oriented toward generating capital for capital's sake. And that was definitely a part of punk. What about you?

Sarah: I never thought I would grow up and be a doctor. It wasn't even vaguely on my radar of things that I would do. When I was finishing college I ended up working at this totally amazing DIY women's health center that used community-based health workers. I had spent most of my adolescence steeped in DIY culture and this clinic kind of encompassed everything that was part of my DIY ideals.

Dan: In what way?

Sarah: Well, it was feminism-based and grew out of the Jane movement in the pre Roe v. Wade era. Basically, community women trained to perform safe illegal abortions. Thousands of women during the years it was in operation basically went to these providers during a time that there were no other means available, and this clinic grew out of that context. So it was based in what to me was a very punk idea—that you can create your own institutions when the ones that were supposed to serve you in society fail. I worked there for six years. Toward the end, I kept trying to figure out what I was going to do with my life. One day, I just had this epiphany that we could keep creating these clinics and mutual aid systems through punk and DIY culture, but unless more people really learned and earned the institutional skills and power, we would always be in a sort of quasi-existence. There is something beautiful about working outside of the system, but in order to effect what seemed to be real activist change, we needed some people who were trained in specific ways. At the health center we almost closed because, although we only needed a few doctors to back us up, we had such a hard time finding activist feminist doctors. So no matter how much we created our own institutions, unless we had that sort of backup we couldn't stay open.

Dan: So you figured that you were either going to spend your life trying to find the best ways to create connections between the people in need of the resources and the resources or you could become the resources.

Sarah: Right. Or we could we spend the rest of our lives looking for the loopholes and figuring out where we could work outside or on the margins of the law. Which can be a good place to be. But although we can always envision alternate systems, in our current system, there have to be doctors. For you, why mental health specifically?

Dan: I found it intriguing that memory and experience are not neutral objective facts. They are colored by our histories, our biases, both conscious and unconscious. Helping people overcome obstacles to happiness and satisfaction seemed like a big mystery that both spoke to my love of understanding people and their stories, and also my excitement about things like literary criticism, where you're doing really close reading of texts for the mysteries that are buried inside of them. I think that people are a lot like that.

Turns out I love it, but also the thing I love about it, the mystery, is also the thing that vexes me the most. Because there's not a definitive answer to the problems that you encounter. There's no one right thing to say when someone presents in my office a certain symptom or particular thing that they're struggling with. It really depends on that person's history, their experience, and their experience of our relationship. So there are times where I'm not sure if I'm being helpful or maybe I could be more helpful in some ways. That uncertainty is terrifying sometimes. I'm doing what I love but I also screwed myself because I wish there was just an answer.

Sarah: How long have you been practicing now?

Dan: I guess ten years.

Sarah: Does it get any easier?

Dan: It gets much easier with time.

Sarah: I've really only been a full-fledged doctor for less than a year, and I feel like in medicine there often isn't a final answer either. When you are dealing with patients in clinic, at least 50 percent of the time what's going on with them has to do with mental health, whether it manifests as a physical problem or not. Even with kids. What are the most common problems I see? Abdominal pain, headache, backache, pelvic pain. So much of that is the intersection of mind and body and stress.

Dan: And displacement of upset to the physical realm?

Sarah: Yeah. I think especially in cultures or communities where there isn't a strong emphasis on discussing emotion. Or there isn't the luxury to discuss emotion.

Dan: Emotion can be a luxury. You might have time to wake up and work all day at your two jobs and feed everybody. And if you can't talk about what's bothering you, things are likely to manifest as physical pain. One of the oldest truths in psychological research is that the best predictor of doing well under stress is your degree of social support. But if you have support but you don't have permission to talk about emotion in your culture, that social support may not be as helpful.

Sarah: Absolutely. It's interesting, because this wasn't necessarily where I thought this conversation would go, but it kind of goes full circle to this theme of punk and health and community. One of the things about the punk community is that it can be this incredible social support for people.

Dan: Yeah, I think the experience of being profoundly alienated is really powerful. And I think punk as a subculture, for all of its failings, definitely is a source of support and validation for people.

Sarah: Do you see that in kids you work with?

Dan: Yes, and I do work with kids that are punks. And while I obviously can't say anything specific about anyone, I worry the most about the people whose families don't understand them. That leaves you with a pretty gaping hole. Some kids get the message that, "You are not like us. That is not OK. We don't understand it, we don't approve of it and we think you need to fix it. Oh, and we're going to take you to a psychologist to fix it." Sometimes I can help parents learn to understand and appreciate their kid's unique qualities even if they don't initially want to or know how to. If I can accomplish that it's awesome, but often I can't.

Sarah: Have you seen those kids create communities that represent new families?

Dan: If they're lucky. I definitely try to steer them in that direction. Not towards punk specifically, but alternative communities that can constitute surrogate family. That's the good thing about punk and youth subcultures. Surrogate family experience, a sense of belonging. Especially if it's got a positive value system as a substrate. It's one of the things I think is really still viable about punk

Sarah: How else do you feel like your involvement (past or present) in punk has affected your practice as a psychologist?

Dan: I think that my perspective on psychotherapy is pretty seriously informed by my background in punk. My perspective on "emotional disorders" and "treatment" is pretty different from the mainstream perspective. I think that the medical model, more often than not, isn't an appropriate framework for dealing with emotional distress, because it implies a disorder, and it implies fixing that disorder. When you're talking about emotional and behavioral difficulties, you get into words that should be scary to punks or anyone who is inclined towards the left politically. You start talking about "deviance" and the obliteration of deviance. And that's political. Deviance is just statistics. It doesn't imply anything wrong or sick. It just implies a pattern of behaviors or experiences that are different from the typical. When someone's way of experiencing emotions is getting in the way of their happiness, you need to figure out a way to deal with it. But putting things in terms of disease and treatment…

Once you've agreed that a set of experiences constitutes symptoms, and that cluster of symptoms constitutes a disease, you are implying that these experiences need to be repaired. This is a slippery slope, because if you follow that chain of reasoning you're basically saying that if people's experience of themselves and their emotions are different from what is typical, that constitutes a disorder—and something needs to be done about that. It's the most important thing I need to say as a psychologist who is also a punk. All those decisions about what is deviant, what constitutes the norm, are not objective. A lot of these decisions about what are the norms of human behavior are to some extent political. They are culturally relative and not absolute in any way. The most obvious example is that homosexuality was considered a disorder at an earlier point in time. If you think about that now, that represents a cultural value judgment, and that's dangerous.

Treatment implies that a person's experiences of themselves and the world is sick and/or incorrect, and I don't think that's helpful. I think that if you're not careful, you get into this notion of social control when you start relying on the medical model too heavily to describe human interactions with emotional experiences. And I'm not saying this so that people out of hand reject mental health as a field or reject access to mental health as an important thing. It's really about whether the set of experiences we're talking about are disrupting one's ability to function—their ability to work and to love and have relationships and to feel effective in their lives. When that's interrupted, then you've got a problem that needs to be addressed. But you know the biggest

problem with me getting referred to teenage clients by their parents is there is a difference in the idea of what constitutes a problem. And my first thing—maybe why I'm good at it—is that kids get pretty quickly that I'm not necessarily their parents' ally. My only real function is to help them figure out what constitutes happiness for them and what are the obstacles to that.

Sarah: That reminds me a lot of the World Health Organization's definition of health, which says that health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. This encompasses many parts of well-being that also include the ability to love and have free access to emotions.

Dan: Freud said a lot of sexist bullshit, but he also said a lot of brilliant things. And the thing that I most take away from his writing is that mental health is the ability to love and to work. And I don't mean work like sitting in a cubicle 80 hours a week, but to experience yourself as productive. What about you?

Sarah: In terms of how punk has influenced my practice? Having had the experience of being involved in punk has been an enormous help to me as a practitioner, because it has allowed me to see a lot more of the variation in people's lives. It is hard for me to see a lot of things as deviant because I've seen a lot of different people live their lives in different ways. And that is an awesome thing to see if you're going to be taking care of people. As an example, all through medical school I worked at a mobile health clinic that does needle exchange, HIV testing, and medical care for IV drug users in Philly. It was awesome. We worked out of a busted old Winnebago. It was interesting to me to watch other medical students come through and get their worlds totally blown because they had never talked to anyone who used heroin or never seen anyone shoot up or never been in the neighborhoods where drug trade happens. For better or worse, through my experiences in punk, I've known a lot of people who have struggled with heroin and a lot of people who have come out of very difficult places in their lives and made decisions that many people would judge harshly but were made for reasons specific to their lives, whether they were right or wrong under my value system. I'm very grateful that I've had the experiences that have given me an open mind. But at the same time, I think it's bi-directional. I think my role in punk is always informed by my life as a doctor.

Dan: You mean outside of getting calls at one in the morning from friends asking you to sew their eyelids up?

Sarah: Yeah, well I get a lot of those. But beyond that it's interesting, because again, it gets back to this idea of creating new institutions through punk. I think on the whole, as a culture, we're very distrustful of medicine, as are most radical or leftist folks. A lot of that is good and healthy, but now that I'm a doctor, I find that blanket suspicion of health care can also be hard to deal with. Like arguing with friends about how there's no evidence at all that vaccines are bad for your kids. I think the point is that it is just as bad to be blatantly anti-anything because it comes from "the man" or mainstream society as it is to wholeheartedly accept everything that society spoon-feeds you.

There's a lot to be critical of in medicine. But as much the system is totally fucked up, the flipside is that I can think of so many examples of how health care activists, whether they are patients or their loved ones or doctors or ordinary folks, have made huge changes in the way that we practice and the way that medicine works. I think that people often get jaded and think that activism doesn't work anymore. But in some ways, the changes that have happened in medicine over the last 30 years are great examples of how activism does work.

You know, the focus of what I do is HIV. And the reason that antiretroviral therapy is available today, and in many parts of the world is widely available and free, isn't because a bunch of doctors or drug companies got together and altruistically decided that people should get treated. It's because people basically rioted in the streets in the 1980s, in the US and worldwide. Gay men, IV drug users, drag queens, sex workers, immigrants, and communities that were just being decimated by the virus basically took over the FDA building and demanded that AZT be taken out of the long review process and be distributed for immediate use. And it was. In South Africa, the Treatment Action Coalition engaged in incredible demonstrations that shut down cities. The movement leaders, who were HIV-positive and could afford medicine, refused to take antiretrovirals until they were freely available to everyone. And it worked. Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, those changes are happening. And again, it's not because of someone in a position of power. It was mostly people getting screwed by the institutions, people who could visualize that another world was possible. So what about the flipside for you? How does your role as a healthcare practitioner influence your job as a punk?

Dan: I'm just a lot more reflective before I open my mouth. I think that working with young people, especially, things you say off the cuff in public get amplified by your visibility as a musician.

Sarah: Are there specific examples where that's happened?

Dan: With lyrics. On the last record there was a lyrical reference to suicide that I was really nervous about. I made sure to explain it in lyric sheet. I was using the word suicide as a metaphor for our species' tendency toward self-destructiveness. It wasn't in any way meant to be a reference to an individual's decision to end their life. It makes me nervous. I'm critical of this imagery that people use in the particular musical subculture that we're involved with, because there are a lot of references to suicide, violence, and misogyny even in punk and hardcore that I think people should take more seriously. I've had to learn to be conscious of my visibility in ways that other psychologists who work with the same type of people haven't. There's a lot of information available about me and a lot of things I say are publically documented. If somebody is looking for a therapist for their kid, they might Google me. You're not going to find anything about psychology if you Google me. You're going to find a lot of music stuff, a lot of ranting and raving about the government. Traditionally in psychology, therapists don't divulge a lot of personal information. I think to some degree I'm constantly concerned that being so visible as a musician is a liability. But it's a liability I've chosen to live with. As a musician, I made a decision a long time ago to be an open book. If you want people to have an intimate and connected experience with the music, you have to handle it a certain way. What about you and conflict between work self and punk self?

Sarah: I'm still very much connected with being part of this community, but I'm not so active in it anymore. When I started being more and more involved in medicine and global health work I found myself being very critical and feeling distanced from punk because I felt sometimes that the view was so narrow. I had done a lot of riot grrrl stuff and ran a zine distro and I felt really passionate about that. Then I went to El Salvador in 1996 and did interviews with women after the civil war who were involved in human rights activism, and I got home and felt like, "Oh my god, what am I doing here? This is a total first world luxury." But the thing is, it's all part of a continuum, or rather a panorama of life's experience. When I was a third-year medical student and I was doing surgery I had this worlds-collide experience. I was on call overnight one night and I got called down to the trauma bay. There was this very cute, very drunk 19-year-old punk girl all covered in tattoos. Her head was busted open—she had gotten wasted and wrecked on her bike. My job was to basically take her upstairs and sew her up. Her super punk boyfriend was there, all jean jacket patches and nerves, and was pacing the hall incessantly. The girl ended up being totally fine. She had no idea what was going on, she was just wasted beyond control. I just wanted to take them both aside and whisper in their ears, "It's OK, I'm one of you too! I promise, we're all friends here."

Dan: Yeah, like they didn't need to be scared.

Sarah: Totally. She didn't have insurance, and they were stuck is this big, scary hospital all freaked out that people were going to judge them. When she came around, she kept saying, over and over again, "I feel so stupid!" She was so drunk so she couldn't say much else. I kept telling her, "No, no, you're not stupid." But what I wanted to say was, "I've totally done this same thing before. I've gotten drunk with my boyfriend riding my bike around and crashed into a street sign."

Dan: With no helmet.

Sarah: Yes.

Dan: And have tattoos I also regret.

Sarah: Totally! "I'm like you! I'm like you!" I felt it so strong. I couldn't say it because of the context and because I had my senior resident watching over me the entire time. But it made me realize that I do still consider myself to be a punk. I had this revelation this year that I'm 32 years old and I left home when I was 16. So now I've lived in punk as long as I ever lived at home, so this is just as much my real family. And I think that's really powerful. Punk is always home. And it's an amazing thing that takes people where most others can never dream possible.

Dan: I'm wondering how some of those experiences in figuring out that you can self-publish, you can create a literature that reflects your experience—did the empowerment that came from your early experiences with DIY inform your decision to pursue medicine and your idea that you could pull it off?

Sarah: I think there's no way I could have

become a doctor without my experiences in punk. I think one of the great things about punk is that it does show you that any world is possible.

Dan: How much do you think that punk's distrust of medicine and reluctance to seek care has to do with the fact that health care is not accessible to everyone?

Sarah: That's huge. I would actually say that health care is not accessible to most people in the US and that's irrespective of whether you're insured or not. Accessibility on one hand is financial—whether or not you have the means to go and get health care. But it also means accessible on an emotional, spiritual, and psychological level. Do you feel like you will be able to go and receive care free of judgment? Do you feel like you will be able to go and receive care from someone who will listen to you and try to understand what is going on?

Dan: Most people I know don't have that.

Sarah: I feel like—and this is my uneducated guess—80 to 90 percent of people feel like health care is not accessible to them. The economic/financial problem of insurance is a huge part. But I also feel like so much of the distrust of western medicine is that it is such a profoundly alienating experience to go to the doctor.

Dan: People will call me and say, "So I fell off my bike and landed on my head and now I can't feel my leg below the knee. Is that bad?" And I'm not a medical doctor, but I know that's bad and I know that there could be serious damage and you need to go to the emergency room. "Oh, I'm not going." And it's usually because they don't have health insurance. But I think that some of people's contempt for the medical establishment arises from the perception of lack of access.

Sarah: Yeah, it's a very unfortunate experience. Our system is set up as a disaster and it's a disaster for everyone. I think there's a sense that most doctors out there only want to get your money and see you for 15 minutes. But the other side of it is that it's also deeply dissatisfying for most practitioners too. Most doctors don't want to see patients for only 15 minutes. Most doctors don't want to work in a system where it's essentially impossible to emotionally connect with your patients.

I think it's awesome that we have institutions that work outside that western capitalist model—the Berkeley free clinic and Chicago Women's Health Center and a number of other institutions. But I think the problem is that those places become overused and remain underfunded. In a sense, if we have a few of those places, it almost undercuts the incentive to work to dismantle the whole system. And sadly, those places don't exist everywhere—they don't exist in a lot of the areas where they're most needed. I want there to be pressure to dismantle the system and rebuild it in a way that is accessible on every level, everywhere.

Dan: Last thing I wanted to say about access to mental health care—every city or state has rules and a set-up for how free mental care can be available. A lot of the time it's as simple as doing a Google search or looking at the front of the phone book. Sometimes parochial organizations like Catholic Charities or Jewish Family Services provide low-cost therapy. Sometimes there are things that are more difficult to find that are really great. There's an organization of private practice providers with a lot of psychologists and psychiatrists in Philadelphia, Center for a Healthy World, where if you don't have insurance you can trade an hour of community service/activism for an hour of healthcare.

The most important thing is that if you're looking for a therapist, you have a right to shop around and to ask questions. Given a hundred well-trained therapists, the most important aspect of a successful experience for you is the comfort of the match between you and that person. Beyond training and expertise, it's about an intimate relationship with another person. It has to feel comfortable. You should ask people what they believe about mental health and what constitutes illness and what they think is helpful about treatment. Why people think therapy works and how. Ask people what they believe. Assert yourself. You have a right to know what the person treating you believes. I can tell you as both a provider and a consumer that therapy can be a really helpful way to manage whatever emotional obstacles you struggle with and increase your access to happiness. That sounds corny, but I think its something more people should aspire to. I think punks especially can be really cynical, but I think happiness is something that people should aspire to, and feel entitled to. And you can define happiness however you want. That's the punk part.

Nursin' School Dropout

By Jeff Mason

Around the turn of the century I worked in the financial district serving coffee. The view out the window was of a large statue. Homeless people and bike messengers loitered around the base. Sometimes I'd look out and see some guy sprawled out on the flagstones at 2 p.m. and I'd think, "Is that my retirement plan?"

A woman I was dating turned me on to the nursing school idea. I like to help people, and I like money. Registered nurses make what to me is big money—in the Bay Area, starting around $60k. I'd already dropped out of college years before—even taking only classes I liked I wouldn't do any work. This time I had a partner to keep me focused and kick my ass when I wanted to give up. We took our prerequisites together at City College of San Francisco, and both of us were accepted to the Nursing program at San Francisco State University. Of course, then we split up. I made it three weeks into the second semester of the five-term program. At that time, it was brought to my attention by an instructor that I was totally ignorant and incompetent compared to the other students. They had all been studying six hours a day and practicing physical assessments on each other, while I studied one hour every other day and got drunk a lot. Physical assessment means taking a pulse, listening to the lungs, etc. I was bored by physiology. I got a $1300 refund by dropping out in a timely fashion. SFSU kept $300, plus the $700 I spent on books and supplies.

To become a registered nurse, one must graduate from an accredited program, and then pass a (I think state) licensing exam—in California it's called the NCLEX. When recruiting students, programs want to brag that everyone who graduates passes the exam. If you don't, you're fucked, and might start talking shit on the school, perhaps to counsel. To further this goal, the SFSU program had an exam at the end of every semester, starting with the second. The exam was worth only 1 percent of your overall grade point average, but if you didn't score at least 70 percent, you had to repeat the semester! (They'd give you a couple tries).

Well, fine, I could deal with that. The problem I had was that they wanted you to buy $400 worth of books on top of the $700 you'd already spent, which repeated the information that was in the other textbooks. A careful reading of the syllabus found the $400 set listed after the other "required textbooks." It said that the extraneous material was "really required," and that unlike the other texts, it was *mandatory* that each student purchase one. They didn't care how I got a hold of *Medical and Surgical Nursing*, but they insisted I shell out $400 for this set. To enforce their will, when you kicked down the $400, you got a ticket which let you in to the semester-end exam, the one you had to pass to move on in the

program! Without the ticket, you could not take the exam! WTF! Pretty soon, this scheme began to make sense to me. The semester-end exam is not a product of SFSU School of Nursing, but an outside contractor who is selling a service to the school. The service they sell is raising the percentage of students who pass the NCLEX exam. The semester-end exam is a practice NCLEX. I'm sure that people who have taken four of these exams do score better than someone coming in without having taken any. What curdled my cream was that I was expected to pay for this service. I test well, so I was prepared to skip the practice exams and take my chances. SFSU not only wouldn't let me skip 'em, they wanted *me* to pay so that an outside contractor could help *their* program look better! Fuck that!

It's not like I didn't learn anything. From the beginning I was fascinated by the social aspects of health care. Maybe you read the story in James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me* about Helen Keller's days as a radical socialist. Finishing school, she had gone to work helping other blind people. She expected to find that blindness, and illness in general, was distributed evenly across society. If only! No, poor people are disproportionately blind, deaf, and anything else you would seek to avoid, owing to their unhealthier living conditions and, even back then, lack of access to health care. A big part of my attraction to punk is *hate* for *pigs* who are ripping everyone else off. This (the ripping off) is called "social stratification" in the academic realm. Physiology didn't hold my interest, because by looking at the insides you can't tell a pig from a punk from a liberal, statist, communist, etc. Social issues do hold my interest, so that's what I paid attention to in nursing school.

I worked on two research projects that first semester. The first was a group project of nine students about gender in nursing. Our sub-group of three had history for our topic. I kicked ass and did all our research, stoking the other kids, who were going crazy studying as I mentioned above. There were some great stories. Unfortunately, I've been unable to find my notes from those days, so I can only share some rough versions… Back in Athens, Greece, the cradle of democracy and Western civilization, there was plenty of stratification. Dudes ruled (uh, if you weren't a slave), and chicks were good for making more dudes. Physicians had status, and it was a capital crime for a woman to practice medicine. Well there was one physician, the star of our story, named Agnodice. Doctors competed for patients and their money, just like today, and our hero was pulling in mad loot treating the women of Athens. In fact, so much money that other physicians became pissed about being shut out of this lucrative gig. Finally the doctors ganged up and hauled our hero to the Senate where a lengthy interrogation followed. "Why are all these women choosing you?" they wanted to know. Finally, Agnodice was like, "Here's why." A toga was lifted, genitalia were exposed on the Senate floor, and the other physicians really freaked now. Our hero said, "Cause I'm a woman! You dudes think you know everything, but a lady can provide other ladies with better health care than y'all can any fuckin' day!"

Being a society of laws, it was quickly decided that homegirl had to die for her affront to legality and propriety. Just then, in a powerful and dramatic plot development, the doors of the Senate were smashed in by a crew of *furious* women. Shit had to be smashed, as no women were allowed in the Senate. But once there, they seized the floor and said Agnodice had done a lot of good, and that it was gonna be *on* if any dude thought he could harm her. The dudes huddled up, then declared that *this one time* it would be OK for a woman to practice medicine in Athens. Indeed, direct action gets the goods.

Another historical development with ramifications on our own day was the invention of forceps. This took place in Europe in the late 1600s. At the time men were physicians, and women were midwives. Pregnancy and childbirth were seen as entirely different from the practice of medicine. Good thing too, as European medicine of the time was unhelpful at best and frequently dangerous to the patient. Women had monopolized midwifery throughout recorded history. With the invention of forceps, men saw a lucrative opportunity. Forceps are basically like salad tongs, and the innovative method used by these doctors was to grab the baby's head and pull! Even at the time, it was noted that this perhaps was not in the best interest of the mother or child. What it was, though, was fast. A guy with forceps could deliver ten kids while the midwife was comforting the mother through one birth. Midwifery was a paid service, and the guy with the forceps was getting rich yanking out babies. There must have been something to it, because there was a demand for this type of treatment. But could any physician rely on women choosing him over a midwife? Physicians turned to the state, and were able to have childbirth decreed a medical circumstance. It became *criminal* for anyone else to assist with a birth. In most of the US, it still is! This was an early step in the licensing of physicians. As happens in many industries today, the point was to keep out underprivileged competition.

In nursing school I became aware of the gendered differences in nursing in the US today. Nurses are mostly (white) women—I think 90 percent are female. Yet men are overrepresented in nursing management and in the higher paying specialties (cardiology, oncology, etc.) The higher one travels up the hierarchy of a health-care organization, the more men one finds. Some female nurses believe that nurses will never have the power they ought to in health care organizations as long as nursing is seen as a woman's job. Men just aren't going to listen to women. It is men who are in position to choose who gets promoted, and in a working environment, men tend to relate better to other men. Men and women have different communication styles, and usually the boss man prefers his own style, so he'll choose a guy to report to him over a woman. Nursing academia is a different story. Men control academia in general; in today's typical university, department chairs are mostly men. Nursing is one of the few departments where it's a given that you can get a lady in there. This may discourage male nursing professors, who can see that they've got no shot at department chair.

I didn't last too long in the program, but I saw a few things. There was one male instructor—a black guy. The rest of the professors were women. There was one Latina, the rest were white. The youngest were in their forties, which I speculate is pretty common among PhD instructors. The teaching of the courses is highly standardized. If you can run Power Point slides, you could have done 80 percent of what the professors did in class. One instructor had just finished her doctorate, and you could tell she was totally bummed to just be reading off of slides. I speculate that this rote teaching style was arrived at to eliminate any variance in the student's knowledge coming from different teachers. The workload for students is extremely heavy (second semester in particular) and a lot of these folks are out of their minds with stress. I think the department wants to insulate themselves from any possible charges of bias or inequity.

Time and space considerations preclude the inclusion of some other stuff, like my time at the VA hospital, or my research into twelve-hour shifts for nurses, but I would like to close this essay with the best story I heard in nursing school. The best lecture of first semester was department chair Beatrice Yorker's talk on legal issues in nursing, she's a lawyer as well as a nurse. She said that once you start working, the hospital will offer to buy you malpractice insurance. Don't do it—buy your own—because if the hospital wants to blame you for a fuck-up they'll cancel your insurance like that (*snap*). Although she didn't touch on it much here, she is one of the world's leading experts on nurses who murder their patients— male nurses are overrepresented, significantly, in this area. She's even cited in the Pinnacle True Crime paperback *Nurses Who Kill*. (When Tim Yo had to go in for chemotherapy, he said he had to bring a book, even though he otherwise never read. I offered to lend him *Nurses Who Kill*. He said *No fucking way!)*

The classic story Yorker told involves the at-the-time largest medical malpractice award in the history of the state of Georgia. A lawyer friend of hers had won it and he told her the story out back of his new giant house. First you ought to know that a malpractice attorney will turn down 100 cases for every one he accepts. Hospitals are wealthy and have many lawyers, so if it isn't a guaranteed sure thing, the lawyer will look elsewhere. The sure thing the lawyer encountered was this: A machine known as an autoclave was being used to disinfect surgical tools. It does this by heating them to some insane temperature, which kills viruses and bacteria. A tool was removed from the autoclave and put into use before the disinfected blade had a chance to cool down. This was not discovered until two male infants had been circumcised, severely burning both penises. One of the boys grew up without a dick, while the doctors were able to convince the other boy's parents they should do *gender reassignment surgery*, a bad name since gender is social construct, but from that day on they reassigned him to being a girl. She grew up to do hell of drugs and die young—several people have told me there's a book on this case. But the punch line is that the previous Georgia malpractice record holder was a female infant who had lost oxygen to her brain and become a vegetable, demonstrating, the lawyer said, that in Georgia you are better off with a dick than a brain. It's true most places! Thank you, goodnight!

WHY HAVE A BATH?

A Health Guide for Crusties

By Fat Bob of Hard Skin

Fuck 2009, and every other fucking year. Know what I mean?? The only other thing worse than some cunt saying "Happy New Year" is when a skeptic tells you "Happy Holidays." Double fuck off. Now I've got that off my ample 36D chest, I'm gonna educate the world, and America about crusties, and why they are killing themselves and this earth. Health is important, and being clean is important, and being clean is health. Know what I mean??

CHANGE YOUR TROUSERS EVERYDAY.

I heard that one of Deviated Instinct didn't wash his trousers for four and a half years. That was until he got a job in a bank. Is it also not a coincidence that Mr. Instinct is now walking around Norwich with one leg. The dirt penetrated his body and leg, and his leg fell off.

CHANGE YOUR PANTS EVERYDAY.

(English for pants not American for trousers, Dumb Arse).

I heard that one of Dirt (ironically) didn't wash his pants for four and a half years. That was until he got a job as a vivisector. Is it also not a coincidence that Mr. Dirt is now walking around anarcho-lalaland with no cock. The dirt penetrated his body and his cock fell off.

DREADS ARE SHIT AND SMELL.

I lived and loved in the '80s. Know what I mean?? If I ever hear another crusty say to me, "Yeah man, the dreads wash themselves after a while," then I'm a monkey's uncle, and be warned, I've never done it with a monkey. Dreads do not wash themselves. Your hair smells like shit because you haven't washed it. The only person that thinks it looks cool is the crusty who stole your last can of Special Brew, whose breath smells like my Gran's poo. Dreads and Thatcher were the two biggest problems in the English nation in the '80s. Shave your head, become a skin, and start life afresh. However, some crusties even when they shave their head, keep the dreads in a bag as a memento of past glories. Crusties are like junkies—once a crustie - always a crustie.

STICK TO BEER AND GLUE AND NOT SMACK.

You live in a squat, or with your mum, or maybe even both. You start taking smack because everyone takes it. It seems like a laugh and it's better than taking a bath. Smack is seriously gonna effect your health.

Here are just a few things you are gonna lose when you become a smackhead

a. Money.
b. Money for cider.
c. Your scratched copies of your Discharge, Hellbastard, Disorder, and Wretched singles.
d. Health.
e. Your life.

There are no glory stories when it comes to heroin. However, my mate Thin Phil has been sniffing glue every-day since he was twelve, and he's sound as a pound—can't remember anything or have a conversation with him, but that's neither here nor there.

GET YOUR BOLLOCKS CHECKED FOR CANCER.

The only time a crusty gets his bollocks out is when he's three sheets to the wind, and walking around The Grosvenor, with his plums out for all to see. I don't want to check your balls, but doctors do. See Oi Polloi's classic, Mind the Bollocks 7" for more information. Oi Polloi is well intelligent and iz better at explaining stuff.

YOUR SWEATY ARM PITS ARE GIVNG ME THE SHITS.

Hey crusty! Do me, and the fuckin', world a favor — don't cut the arms off your Extreme Noise Terror or Anal Intruder t-shirt. Keep them in place and let my nostrils and health live to fight another day. Your pits smell of squat, of veggie slop, of arse-crack, and fuck knows what else. If I'm in a room with you, I can only last 45 seconds max. Yes, it's that bad.

GIVE EM ENOUGH SOAP

I think the funniest album sleeve ever would be to get a picture of a hellhole crusty gig, say any gig at the Burnt Ramen, and just call the album Give 'Em Enough Soap. Soap is fucking good for you and it don't even hurt your eyes because it has been tested on animals. The old Oi! saying from Sir Jimmy Pursey was, "A Wash a day keeps a crusty away." He said this in 1979, and it's as relevant today as it is tomorrow. That is the end of education and lessons. Some may ask why there are only seven, and I would reply to that, "None of your fuckin' business," Know what I mean??

Fat Bob
Gipsy Hill
South London
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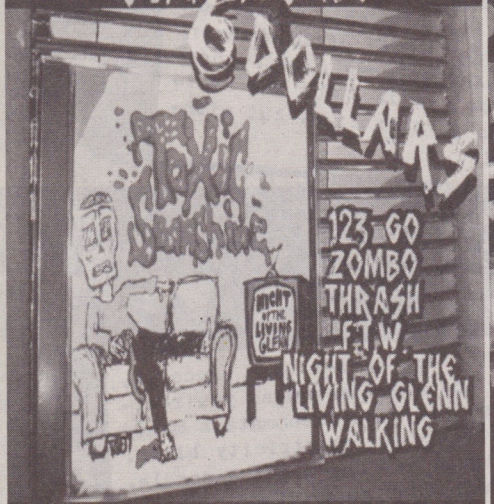

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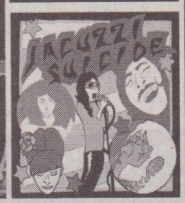

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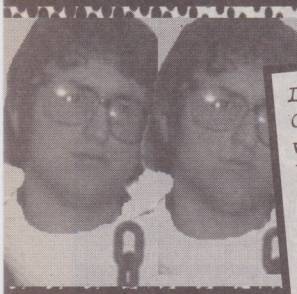
21st Century Schizoid Man

by Brace Belden



Like everything I do, this started as a gag, as a gas-you know, a joke. I heard Our Friends here at Maximum were planning out a Health issue, and as the Film issue was such a welcome break, I brought up how I'd do every drug in one week and report back the effects on my body. I forgot about this for a little while, until Layla calls me from some sort of meeting and demands an article. I, dumb shit that I am, oblige. Note first, though, that while this is supposed to be a week of doing every drug (barring hard to get ones like DMT and Peyote or sex-shop ones like Poppers or Horny Goat Weed), I only made it six days, and didn't do speed. I got the sort-of flu on the seventh day, and I couldn't find any meth to save my life, but without further flirtation here's the real deal, scabs and all.

Everyone likes drugs. Everyone. Hell, they're better than broccoli, and they're better than being on tour, and sometimes when you really love 'em they're better than your records, your roommate's money he keeps in his sock drawer, and your rent and electricity bills. So let the electric company shut the lights off and light a candle, curl up in a pathetic pustule-covered ball and read my story of *Doing As Many Drugs As Possible in Almost a Week and Then Feeling Like Dirt for a Long Time Afterwards*. Ah, to be young and in love!

And I was sitting there and it was all great, you know? The future bright in my eyes, tongue wet, fingers tense and grabbing. Feet always moving—you know, the way they do when you're nervous, a sitting-dance of shifting, left-right-left-right-left-right scoot stuff. I was sitting in a chair and I was waiting. So I sat and I sat and I sat, which isn't so bad, I could've been standing. I could've been sitting outside (it was raining and it was night time) or I could have been dead. I sit there and I consider these alternatives, dismiss them all as dumb daydreaming, and focus intently on a piece of stained wood that makes up the floor in front of my seat. It's important to concentrate. I'm still sitting half an hour later when the doorbell rings, and it's a bald guy and he has the things I want to purchase, so I purchase them and I sit down and with drenched palms and furrowed brow, begin to furiously snort cocaine. No time for lines, perching a bit on the point of a key, lift, snort, repeat. Pass to Dan. Lift, snort, repeat, pass to Colby. Lift snort repeat back to myself. And it feels, well, good.

And every sad sucker here on Gods Own Earth wants to feel good, right? Everyone knows everything is a drug, that point's been tread and re-tread by smug ironists for years upon years, and its sentiment, though doubtlessly tired beyond use, endures. I mean some of you out there collect Judge t-shirts and some of you spend every godforsaken waking hell-hour with your two gazers glued to a computer screen, clicking and selecting. It makes you feel good. Preaching hedonism is an awful profession, but hell, is it hedonistic to get pleasure from the B-side of *Bringing It all Back Home*? How about the A-Side? You can get high off anything *if you so desire*. Including heroin.

Dan left to a party, so Colby and I cop four dimes of dope over on Golden Gate, near City Hall, and then we're in Dave's house cooking it with a bit of water on a spoon. It congeals and looks like olive oil and then it looks like rat shit and then it doesn't look like much, because it's up a straw and up my nose and it's collapsing my nerve endings and it's turning neutrons into neurons and then those into a great time, one fantastic fuck in my head that gently slithers down my body to my toes, making a nothing task like smoking into a Helluva Great Time. I mean Will Burroughs can screw off into oblivion (he lied to me-this isn't a thousand screaming yelping orgasms at all), but this stuff is pretty alright. I imagine it's much better if you shoot it. I smoke another cigarette, and it feels like heaven on earth.

There was a time in my life I reckon I'd sleep with pretty much anyone. I'd wet my willy in anything alive, swap spit with anyone that'd have it. Times have changed, though, I've gotten slapped a few times, and I've zipped the zipper and tucked in my shirt (this last part is real truth-if you're a slob you might as well be a neat one). There's a certain air of haughty class that I believe (hope) surrounds me, and I've chiseled my lifestyle down to where I can finally pick and choose. Well, mostly beg. And I thought, no, I mean, I truly deep down *believed*, that I felt the same way towards drugs. I remember days long past when I said cocaine was for Chaos in Tejas types, but every man's gotta grow up. I thought heroin was for Lou Reed and limpdicks who couldn't cough a chord like the Sex Pistols (my actual favorite band). But shit on me. I sniffed the snuff starting years ago and I did heroin last night, so in lieu of these things and the fact that every man on God's Green Earth has to coddle his cojones and 'mature' sometime. Please bear with me when I tell you that I, Brace Belden, *Real Punk* 100% GISM Discharge Leather Jacket, swallowed and felt the effects of a pill of ecstasy.

Dan's house, some girls, Whip-Its, lots of loose lip talking and hard drink drinking, times passes, then I'm dead drunk in a cave near the beach, to the left of some rusted orange bathhouse ruins, then in a car to my house so I can pick up enough cocaine and pills to let me forget the reality of the situation, which was that I had been offered ecstasy, and that I had accepted. I'm with people. Then I'm not and then I am again, couch-sitting in some low rent dope den on 17th street surrounded by lots of nice girls and a small guy with his shirt off. I snort cocaine and take a pill I bought off a bum (mystery to drugs is curry powder to cheap dinner) and even smoked some dope, sucking the molasses-sweet smoke off tin foil with a half cut straw.

Anyways this ecstasy guy comes and I take his medicine with a gulp of a beer, sit and let the waves of Sex Hot Rave Dance Techno Enjoy Bonnaroo wash over me. I took it with a girl that was there, she lay down on that floor in front of me and a small young blonde girl gave her a massage for the next

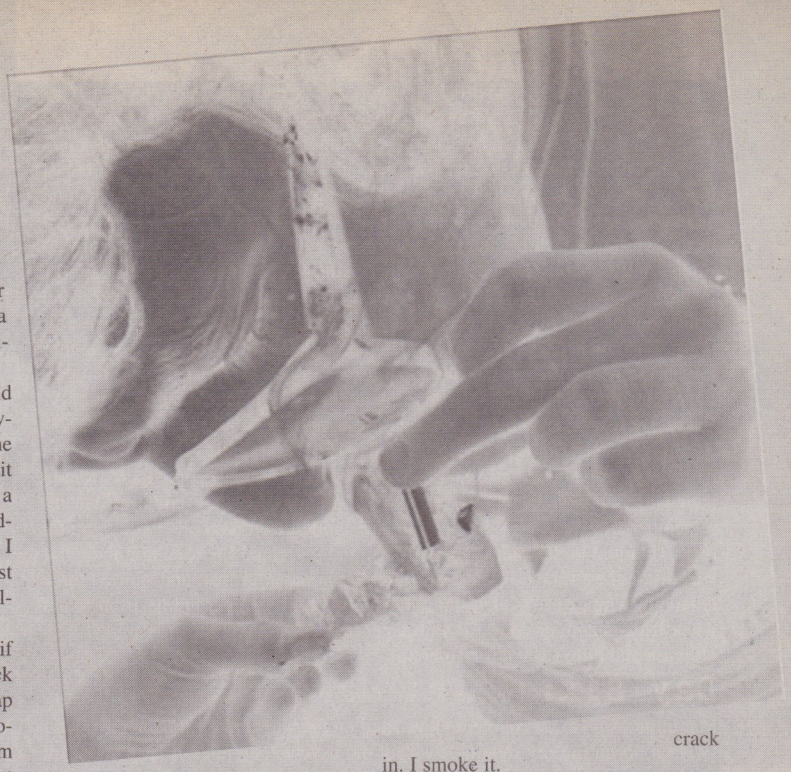
two hours. I put Ted Nugent on and floated on waves of chemical high. So ecstasy doesn't feel like much, sorta just another log on the fire, or another wave on the beach. I end up in the bathroom unable to piss, looking down at the pitiful thumbnail-sized organ my prick has become. I spit in the toilet, flush it, go and sit down on the couch and next thing I know I'm treading the celestial void, you know, I'm asleep.

Day Three: I think I am going to die. A great growl emits from a cavity that previous to last night did not exist, and I think it's somewhere near my esophagus but it's definitely not in my stomach. It screams and emits a great cackling caterwaul, then a deep grumble and finally what sounds suspiciously like a cartoon-styled *pop*. I pass out.

I wake up again. It's noon. Delirious, I grab an empty pack of cigarettes and rush out the door to the bus. I make it to my house, douse myself in the shower, pop three Percocets and lay on my bed and listen to Albert King assure me that there's broads and there's booze and there's dope and there's dopes but it all don't matter as long as you can shave and shit and piss and cum. I smile a great grin, drifting through space using pills as a pass, until I realize that I didn't have to shave and I had already shit and downers make it hard to piss and I will fall to my knees and praise the good Lord and never sin again if I can just cum once more. I feel like weeping, but that's liquid too, and all liquid is really just jizz, and to paraphrase our man Mick, I just ain't got *that much*.

I get up around seven and I leave my house, which is the next logical step if you're going somewhere else besides your home to make and smoke crack cocaine. Which is, what I did. And which isn't, unfortunately, as finger-snap easy as I snottily thought it'd be. I say snottily because, in my upper class arrogance, I figured that to a guy as intelligent as I, making crack would be a swim in the pond, a walk in the park. Turns out it isn't, not at all. I head to Dan's, meet up with some unfortunate types, and after a bit of discussion I fetch baking soda, a piece of steel wool, a crack pipe, and a box of Whip-Its.

By the time I make it back, there are several interesting characters waiting for me. Eric, whose combed-blonde hair and no-nonsense glasses belie a *real wild child*, Dave, who's short and mean looking, missing teeth with faded tattoos. His gal, who sits patiently while her man cooks crack, Joe, a longbeard shorthair who looks like he should work at Aquarius Records, and some of his outtatown friends, including an eighth grade teacher. Dave's the most experienced at this sort of alchemy, he cooks the crack using a bit of baking soda, a dollop of water, a pinch of cocaine, gathered in a spoon and heated over an open flame. In a coupla minutes there's no longer cocaine in front of us-there's crack. Real Crack, but it ain't rocks—it has the consistency of brown sugar (if it was white), and looks delicious. I tear up the steel wool, put a small piece in the end of the stem of the crack pipe so's it acts as a sort of filter, put some cigarette ash on top of it (so you ain't smoking steel), and sprinkle some



crack in. I smoke it.

And it doesn't work. It barely burns, and I inhale more steel than anything else. My throat burns, it's like swallowing razors. A couple other guys give it a try, we realize the pipe is a waste so we grab some tinfoil and freebase heartily, and boy it feels like something else. My head implodes and my hands melt-but not psychedelically, more like a great horrible feeling, attacking instead of seducing. I feel terrible and wonderful and then it's over in a little bit, so I sniff some regular coke and we smoke the rest of the crack. Dave splits with his gal, and the rest of us head to a bar.

An hour later I get a text message from Dave asking where the nearest hospital is. I call him, concerned, and he says he's been puking blood for a good hour and it's getting worse, and that, oh jeez, oh man where's the goddamn hospital? He lets me know later his ulcer has done something awful like explode and his stomach is bleeding and he can never drink again. Heavy shit. I get loaded and go on home, right around three.

Day Four: I spend most of the day in a semi-stoned torpor, lost in a coma on a stone bed staring at a purple ceiling in a basement apartment in a town I can't afford. I throw up and then I jerk off and then I lie on my side and smell the wet cigarettes trapped in cans next to my bed. It stinks and I stink. I'm in a foul, black mood, and I curse it all, the rotten friends I've had, the aches and pains I got in my sides and chest, Montana, my own two eyes, everything. I scowl and I spit on the wall, one more yellow-white stain on the purple wall of my discontent, which is actually the purple wall of my basement apartment bedroom. I let out hideous cries that shake the foundations of my stinking building, and rattle the neighbors and crack the glass. I spit some more and I scowl.

At around nine o'clock I take an eighth of mushrooms and walk around, feeling like used dirt, my feeble footsteps resembling a drunk's weave. My brain rejects psychedelia. I feel only a simple sort of high all over my body, chest in particular. I find a party, find the beer, sit down and drink it and I glare. Before I know it I'm drunk and it's been several hours and I take the bus home and smoke a pack of cigarettes before I fall asleep, eyes somewhere else, mind a thousand miles a minute, taking notes and drawings and ripping them to shreds; a mad bum, a pathetic villain. I lay on my bed and look at the pipes and listen to them screech and wheedle and plead into the night, and before I know it I'm asleep, dreaming of a thousand places but here.

Day Five: It's deep night dark out, looking at the sky's like gazing into your own asshole, and I'm awake, my eyes are watering and I have a hard-on, but it hurts and I fall back asleep. And then I really wake up and I stand up and my chest, then lungs then throat, then jaw, then mouth and then my entire body, from little toe to forehead explodes with one giant cough, propelling me backwards onto my bed. I lie there for a while and I stare at the wall next to me. Purple. Who the hell paints a wall purple?

And then I'm standing again, and this time I got my life on a leash, no wheeze-falls right now. I try to get a hard on but I can't (was I dreaming earlier?), and then I piss and it feels alright, sometimes that's better than a jack-off

anyway. I wash my face and I shave it too. Electronic clock says it's 5:30, ears say it's raining outside, and then mouth swears when the brain realizes that I have an hour and a half to present myself at the *mandatory Maximum meeting*.

And I slogged and flogged myself through the rain and sleet and hale to twist my key into that hellish lock, fling open the door of the Maximum compound and stride shoulders first through that cavernous garage. Pausing briefly to spit in the washing machine, then all but bursting through the inner door only to catch Layla Gibbon dead-center in a speech detailing some sort of quandary the magazine's in. I don't pay attention and sit on the stairs, out of ear and eye and brain shot of the collective masses and force myself to drink from a bottle of booze I had tucked away. The tab of LSD I had in my pocket burned a hole into my chest, inserted itself, throbbed like a second heart. It beat its way into my fizzed fuzzbrain. it was all I could think about. If I took acid that night, I knew I would surely be crossing the boundaries, tempting the fates.

But because I am a wimp, I didn't take it. I sat around at the after-meeting party looking pathetic and soaking the stares of the other people there. Randy patted me, and Layla looked sad and Cissie showed some emotion. I can't remember what was said, by them or me, though I do remember coughing up real live liquid in the bathroom, whiskey, and it seemed I was puking though it was just a chest thrust. I beat a hasty retreat home after that, and snorted three Dilaudid, wrapped myself in three blankets, lit a cigarette and let it burn and when it disintegrated into ash and paper and useless chemicals, I joined it in oblivion and didn't wake for 16 hours.

Day Six: I awake with a start, glance at the clock. Two. I go to Maximum, sigh out a couple reviews, and on the way home I tongue the acid. I swish it around in my mouth, savoring the psychedelic juices that'll soon jolt my body and smash ego and shatter id. I make it back to my apartment, where I listen to a few sides and lie on my bed, then I go to Colby's house, less than a block away. The acid is kicking in, sort of. I feel stoned and I laugh a lot, and sometimes I can't finish my sentences as well as I'd like, but no dungeons or bats or psychotronic visions that send me shaking. We sit around and look at the ground, and after a little while I decide to split.

As I'm walking outside, things start to appear somewhat off. Streets melting, vision blurring, bums appearing out of nowhere then disappearing just as quickly. I decide I need pizza and purchase a slice from a ratty joint on Polk and O'Farrell. Eating the slice is a difficult matter (especially here, where the pizza is one part dog shit and the other part fingernail), and one that takes a great deal of concentration, but I muster up the ability and slam it down. It felt like there was nothing in my head beyond my teeth, which made swallowing a difficult venture. And this is when I start feeling weird.

It's raining, so I head home, but I'm glad about it, positively jubilated. I sit and pick out records, pulling them and tossing them in a pile and rubbing my hands and muttering about what a great night I'm going to have discovering the "grooves within the grooves," as I wrote in my notes, hippy-dribble talk. I put on the A-side of SF Sorrow by the Pretty Things and noticed a few new things: "There is a hidden guitar solo (acoustic) buried in the third part of the title track. Watch for it-it is a sneak. During Private Sorrow, the wind section is strikingly reminiscent of the ambient noise found in certain rice paddies in Southeastern Vietnam circa 1664"

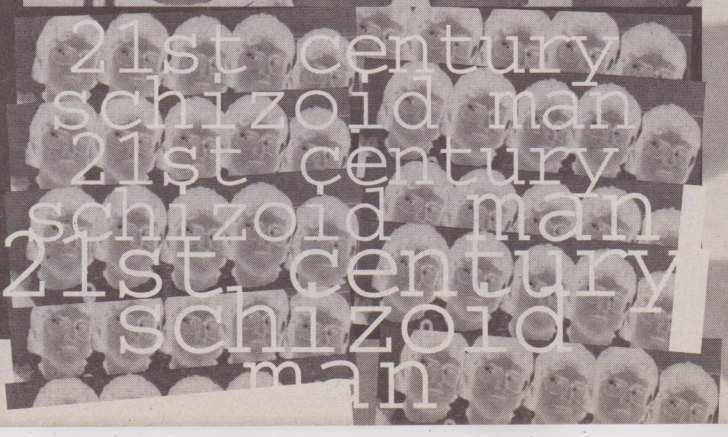
I go on, (and on) but space and patience do not permit. Soon after these sage ruminations I notice a steady click-clack on my window, and a glance outside lets me know it's hailing. This is a big deal for me, I suppose, as the typewritten page on my desk reads, "IT IS HAILING I GOTTA GO". I am of sound mind enough to gather a walkman and three cassettes: King Crimson *In the Court of the Crimson King* and it's logical follow-up Wire *Chairs Missing* and a self-dubbed copy of Hue Blanc's Joyless Ones *Arriere-Garde* LP. I put on my cheap-o shit headphones and make it outside, almost blown down by the sheer force of this hard rain. Click-click-click-click-click-click-click, and I start walking, heading at first deeper in the Tenderloin then making a quick left on Geary and stomping down the street, jumping over street rivers of rain that could be blood, flying by the most well made-up women, leaping over the most decrepit of the neighborhood's wretch-bums. Midway to Market my heart seizes and my ego swells then shatters, winter wind scattering innumerable pieces of Last Punk Brace Belden under legs and over ears and into store-fronts and open car doors down into the gutter to the sewer to the sea.

Trivialities such as punk and making sense and laws and girls and even drugs ('cepting LSD) seem so fucking banal, and with each heavy foot step and each refrain and chorus I can see where all these peace and love types were coming from when they all burned up into outer space on these sorta trips, and hell I even envy 'em (for a second). But Fripp feedbacks into my ears bringing me back down to Jupiter with him and he tells me that, 'Fuck, Brace, I know you gave up your name and are living with the Diggers in Golden Gate Park but fella, we wrote this song *alla* way back on March 15th 1969,I turn to Greg Lake and I tell him, I tell him: do me and Mingus proud and write a God-Damned Song *for* Brace Belden." So says Robert Fripp (inventor of two things: Neopolitan Iced Cream Sandwiches and the "Frippertone") and all these years later his and Lake's carefully laid plans hatch and come to fruition. And my ego, precious as it is to me, re-forms. They did it all for me, y'see, and needless to say I drop the hippy posturing.

Anyways enough head humping, at this point I made it to the Hotel St. Francis, which is resplendent in the midnight moon with its red and gold carpets and inlays. I take a very difficult leak in a bathroom on the bottom floor, press a button on a wall, and head into a Glass Elevator. I ascend 33 floors in an instant, the entire Eastern part of the city laid out in front of me, it's future spires and lights beckoning me. I am overwhelmed for a moment, before I feel a lurch and begin to slide slither slime down thousands of feet, back to ground floor. Al of a sudden I become quite maudlin, depressed, horribly, terribly, inconsolably morose. Images of soft hair and beautiful faces with gaunt expressions float eerily through my mind. I choose to ignore this ghostly procession though, and when I put on Wire and it all changes. At this point I start to notice something: My cheap-o headphones, are completely broken, have been for a week, and the racket coming from them isn't Wire but a harsh and violent *cluzzzzzzzzzz*, with the Brits clanking around only fuzzily in the background. But I listen still and I walk, and I realize truly what it means to be a punk. Leather sneer knife cigarette mean frown fuck. I go home and take off all my clothes and dance naked to the Thai Orchestra LP, and then James Brown, which is when I take a sip of a Coca-Cola can I had filled with cigarette ash and I spit it all over my nude form and come down. The next six hours are spent in a speedy bliss, taking all the pills in my house and then crawling down the street for more. It being six-thirty in the morning, nothing was available, so I huddled up into my blanket for the blissful slumber of a man re-formed.

Underture

Well hell, it hurt a lot, and it's been a couple weeks and I still don't feel good. Though that could be on account of my continued use of pharmaceutical substances since this Working Week. I cough and I sputter and I mutter to myself, and I'm getting kicked out of my apartment and I don't have a job and I don't go to school and I have fifteen dollars and I owe most of it to someone else and I have to move back in with my parents. I spent most of the money I did have left on stuff like Groundhogs *Split* (you ever *heard* "Cherry Red?" Aw jeez, oh man), and the VKTMS and even Decry *Falling*. You think records are any different than dope? Hell man, you ain't ever done neither. I get the same feeling rummaging in Grooves as I do when I'm buying something unspeakable in an alleyway, and I realized that both make you feel like shit eventually, whether you ain't got any money left and your dick's small as a sewing needle or you bring a girl home just to play Red Krayola, and she just sits and grimaces, picks at a scab, ends up with your roommate and you just jerk off into oblivion listening to the bed squeak on the other side of the wall, as it goes *creek creek creek*.



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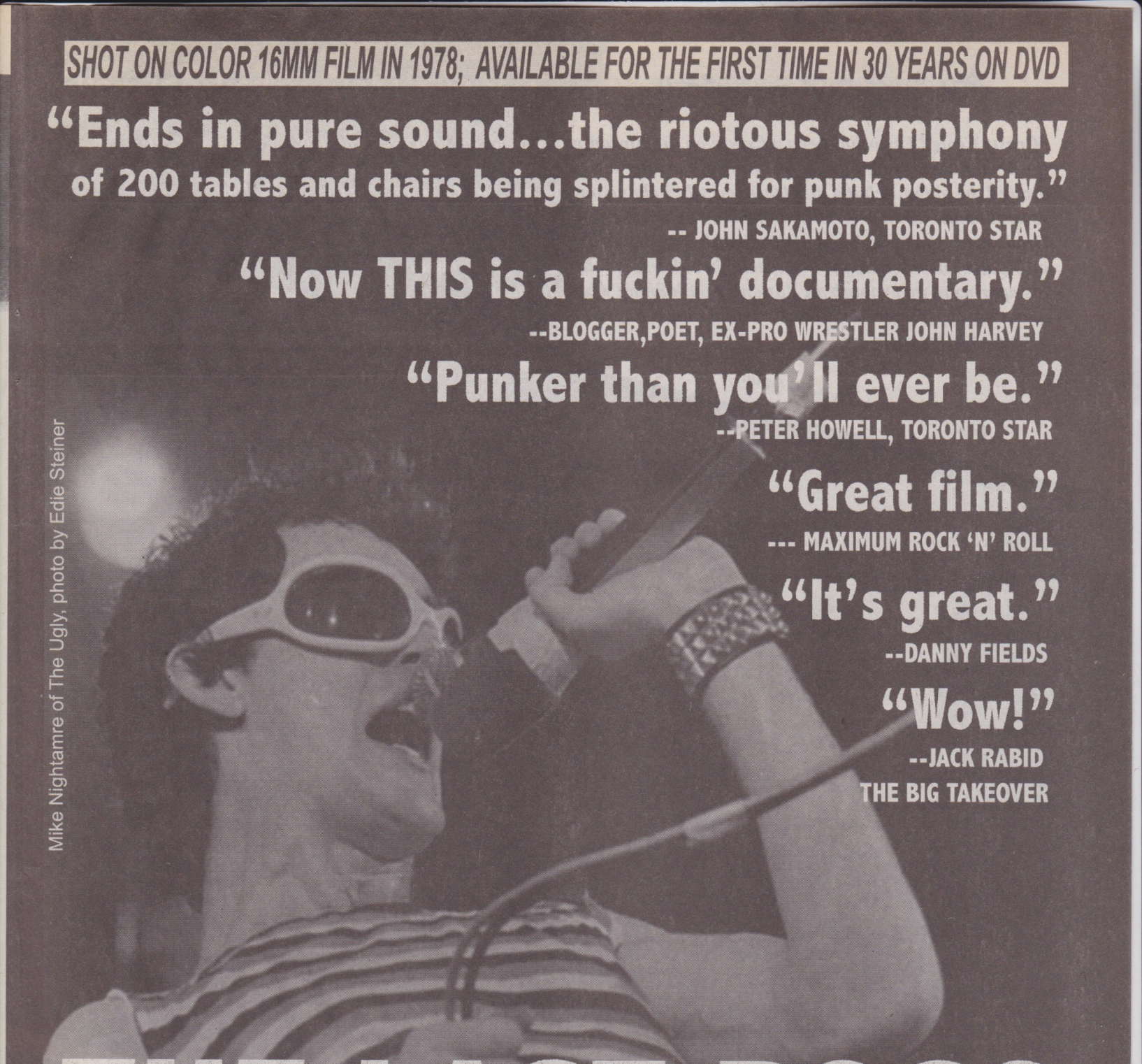

Mike Nightamre of The Ugly, photo by Edie Steiner

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An interview with... Craig Lewis from Boston

"Crusty Craig" Lewis has been a fixture on the Boston punk scene for well over a decade. Actually, not only the Boston scene—he's also a mainstay of the international punk scene, tirelessly seeking out loud sounds from around the globe, helping to release records, helping out touring bands, doing a zine (Upheaval) and playing several bands- Krema-1, Astronaut Catastrophe, Melee, Keep Laughing, and, most recently, Weapons Grade. Craig has also had a lifelong battle with mental illness, suffering from the symptoms of Bipolar Disorder. So for this special health issue, I sat down with Craig in his apartment in a suburb on Boston's South Shore where he talked about his experiences with punk, mental illness and, as he describes it, his recovery.

Interview and photos by Al Quint

MRR: Why don't you introduce yourself and tell me how you got into punk rock.

Craig: My name's Craig and a lot of people know me as "Crusty Craig." I just go by Craig these days. I got into punk rock by chance. It was back in '88—I went to Newbury Comics in Harvard Square in Cambridge and, for some reason, bought a copy of *Maximum Rocknroll* (#58 I think it was, which was the March 1988 issue), not knowing what punk rock was outside of what I read in that magazine. I ended up being put in a mental hospital in April of 1988. I met more than a couple of punk rockers there, and that was my real start. I was introduced to Black Flag, the Circle Jerks, Dead Kennedys, and bands like that. More or less, since then, I've been into punk at a level of intensity that has generally been passionate and very strong.

MRR: What appealed about it to you?

Craig: I was always a person who felt rejected and did not fit in, and I found with punk and hardcore music—I was really into anything underground at that time and I suppose I still am—It was belonging to something I didn't understand but somehow I knew understood me.

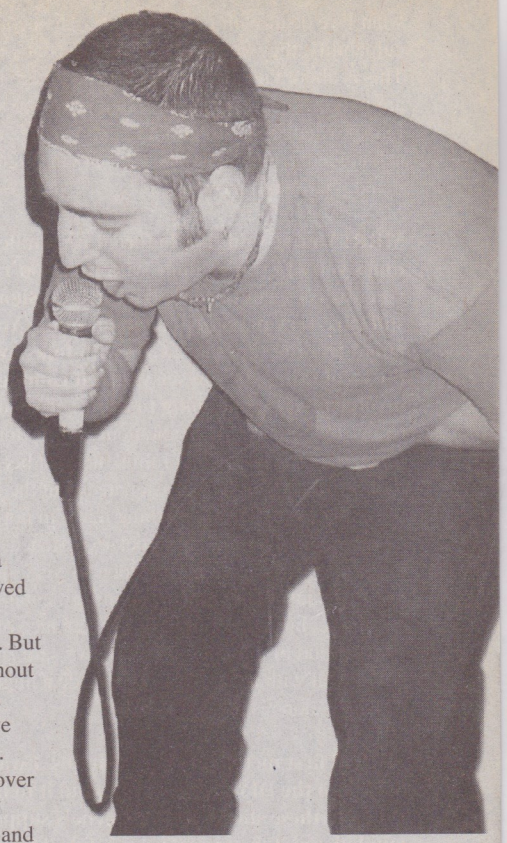
MRR: You said you found out about it through *Maximum*. Did you have any exposure to the music before you picked up that issue?
Craig: I'd heard "Nite Klub" on the radio on WERS (Emerson College station) and I heard more metal stuff on the early "Nasty Habits" in the late '80s, probably. I had a couple friends when I was a preteen growing up and we'd listen to things like Metallica and Suicidal Tendencies, but I didn't have much exposure beyond that. At the same time, *Garage Days Re-revisited* (by Metallica) came out and we heard all those songs. We just didn't know it was music that was part of this huge punk movement. It was just music that we listened to.

MRR: Let's talk about your mental health issues. Growing up, you said you were institutionalized around a month after you got your first issue so why don't you talk about that, what you had to deal with growing up. You said you felt rejected.
Craig: That feeling of rejection had just begun, because the journey I was about to take was worse than I ever could have expected. I was put into a mental hospital, which was, of course, extremely difficult. Anyone who's ever had that experience knows what that is like.

MRR: How old were you?
Craig: I was fourteen and a half. I was put into the hospital because the doctors I was seeing and my family thought I had some serious issues—which I did. I think a lot of my problems are hereditary and I grew up in a household with a very angry father. He had his reasons for being that way; nevertheless, it was a huge trigger for my own mental health issues to manifest themselves. I was in a hospital for four months, and then I was moved to a residential home for adolescents with behavioral problems and that was a complete nightmare.

MRR: How so?
Craig: I think the biggest problem was that I had mental health issues and I was living in a home for people who had behavior issues. To this day, I can't comprehend how that was acceptable, and I just feel like my parents did the best they could and, quite frankly, their best wasn't good enough because I was failed. I was repeatedly put into situations that scarred me and caused me quite a lot of mental and emotional trauma. I'm just glad I'm here today.

MRR: Would you say that being into punk helped you get through this stuff or cope with it?
Craig: In my first group home, I still didn't fully grasp what punk was. I had no exposure to punk at the group home with the exception of listening to the radio, because Boston's always had really great radio. I'd have a weekend pass sometimes and I'd visit my family. Then I'd visit my friend Danny. We'd listen to a lot of music together. That was something that would rescue me from the week at this residential school, which was locked and actually quite miserable. I went to my first show the day after I got released from the group home—Wrecking Crew and Nuclear Assault. I still have the ticket stub. I don't know how it, but somehow we got backstage in that huge room at the back of the Paradise (club in Boston). It was a real trip. It was intimidating and awe-inspiring at the same time, and I just knew, at that moment, that I was going to be doing that for the rest of my life. Of course, what I didn't know was that punk rock would be such a huge part of my life and other parts of my life due to the mental health issues and the conditioning and the trauma that I went through. A lot of things got pushed aside and punk became my main focus for almost my entire time that I've been involved with it.



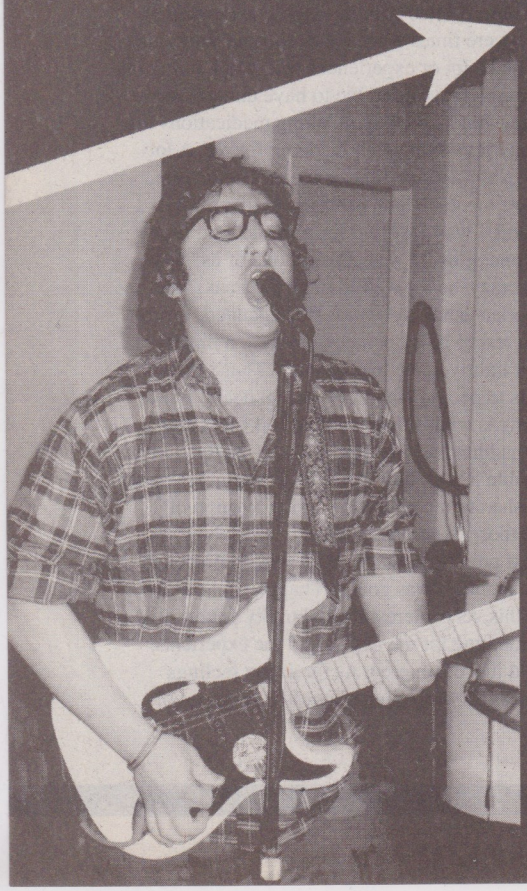
MRR: I was thinking about the Minutemen song "History Lesson Part II," and I thought the line was "punk rock saved our lives," but then realized I had it wrong. It's "punk rock changed our lives." But do you think either or both of those apply to you?
Craig: I'd say that punk rock saved my life as many times as it almost (made me) take my own life. I just think that if I had a scale, the "punk rock saved my life" is just heavier enough to win the battle. But definitely, no doubt, without my involvement in punk rock, I would not be alive today. No doubt about it. And I bear the scars all over my body. Some you can see and some you can't, and that's how it goes.

MRR: Let's talk about the punk scene and how mental health issues interact with it. Within the punk community, do you think there's there a stigma attached to people with mental health issues? Are people accepting of it? Are people uncomfortable with it? What have you found from your own experiences?
Craig: My experience, in the '90s, was that a whole lot of people were against taking medications, which, though they've caused me a whole lot of problems, at this point in my life are extremely beneficial to me. There were times when I was abusing drugs and abusing myself, and I had a lot of experiences where not taking my pills caused me more problems, caused me to have unnecessary manic episodes. People would frown upon taking medications for mental health issues, and it was quite stigmatizing for me. A lot of the punks growing up at the same time as me and before me, they all had some sort of mental health problem. It was always accepted. In my situation, I was accepted for a whole long time. "Just ask Craig—he's one of us." I was always "one of us." I was never, "that guy's crazy, he's a weirdo or he's a freak," and unfortunately, my experience has shown me that changed. I went from being one of the crew to being someone to have a finger-pointed at, and to put it lightly, to be manipulated. That's just something that happens to people who have mental health issues like I do. The good thing is what's done is done and I feel that every experience I've had has had a huge benefit to me upon my life no matter how terrible it was, how horrible, how embarrassing, or how much I was pushed to the point of wanting to jump off a bridge. Every one of those experiences, as painful as they were, got me to the next point I needed to be at with just enough learned experience to face what was going to happen next. I just saw that life followed this very interesting and tricky pattern that immediately, when something hit me next, I had the experience from something that I'd just conquered. As far as my feelings about the punk scene today, I think, quite honestly, that a lot of

what I've dealt with is unfortunate. The people who have any sort of culpability, they know who they are. That's not what this is about. This is about knowing who I am and where my responsibilities are in things and how I get to that next step so I can say all right, I acknowledge the situation. I acknowledge my responsibility. I acknowledge that I've done a lot of crazy stuff, and I have to accept it and it's time to move on.

MRR: You've said that before. I remember there have been times you say you're done with this, you're dropping out, but you always seem to come back after a short time. I know you still care very passionately about punk. You're always talking about trading tapes and CDs with folks overseas. But in terms of the local thing, do you see yourself coming back in terms of any involvement except going to shows occasionally?
Craig: Boston's kind of ridiculous. I did a lot of years here supporting the scene, and I think it's just become a shadow of what it once was. I was very passionate about the DIY community, and it's really turned into something that I'm not interested in. I should mention that over my punk rock experience, I've done and said a lot of things that I regret. I was probably very sick when I said them, and that's just the reality of having a mental illness. It's certainly not an excuse, but it's definitely an acceptance of responsibility. I'm not really proud of a lot of the things I've said and done. I *am* proud of how I deal with things now. I've made a huge transition in my life, so what's done is done.

MRR: I first met you in the mid-'90s. I was starting to come back into the DIY scene and I found it to be kind of exclusionary. I'd go to these shows and the scene's supposed to be so open-minded and, for some reason, I didn't feel comfortable or really accepted there. Do you think it's really any different now than it was then? How do they compare or contrast with each other?
Craig: It's funny you bring that up because people would say that and I would be, like, "What are you talking about? This is great." But, looking back, I remember that a lot of the people I was working with were full of shit, and maybe I was full of shit to a certain degree too. I'm just glad that those days are over. There were good times, I saw a lot of great bands, had a lot of great experiences. At the same time, here we are sitting at a table and we both made it through, so I guess that's what I want to celebrate. But it wasn't very pretty. It was a lot of bullshit. Anything you're a part of that's centered around some sort of social scene or community, there's going to be bullshit. We had a lot of great shows: Code 13, His Hero Is Gone, Assuck, Spazz—there were dozens of bands of that caliber, but I can see how someone would have felt it was elitist. I guess I just didn't recognize it at the time. I certainly didn't want to be a part of that. I guess I was just a little bit glazed over like a donut. [*laughter*]

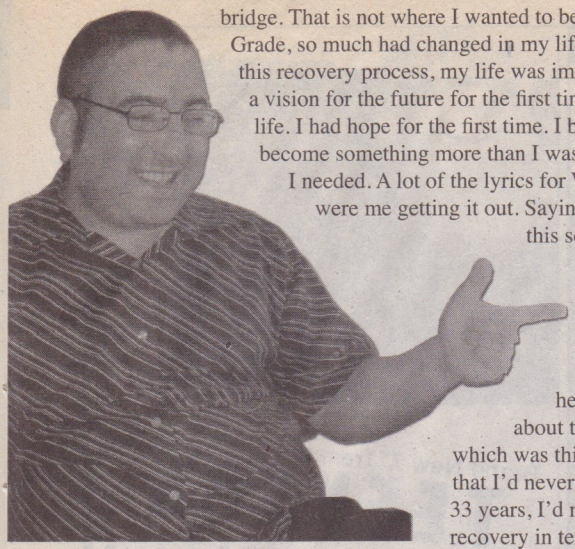


MRR: Cause when I first met you, you weren't all that friendly to me [*laughs*].
Craig: I was probably fucked up, too. I had a lot of social problems. Mental illness is not a pretty thing. And, for the majority of my life, I didn't have much control over myself. To answer the question of how do I view things now compared to then, I feel like punk rock has become something that is easy and simple and it takes no effort. In a town like Boston, which is a college town, it's really a shame—and this is not a put-down against people who go to college, I think college is great—that people who can afford to come in and run things do it to serve their own needs, excluding a lot of people. That's not a personal attack. That's just a general overview.

MRR: Tell me about your zine. When did you start and what's motivated you to keep doing it? And didn't you stop for a while?
Craig: *Upheaval* zine started in 1995. It was always about international raw punk rock, hardcore thrash, Dis-beat, you name it. It was my passion. I was writing about bands from all over the world, from Japan to Sweden to Peru to Brazil, Mexico, Southeast Asia, lots of different places. When it got to be 2001, I had a back injury, a herniated disk. That pretty much put a big halt on things and, for several years after that, I became so sick through depression and losing my abilities to care for myself—losing any sense of a social situation or community. That was torture for me and I stepped away, and I didn't want to. Then, in 2007, I said I'm going to do this again because I want to, I'm good at it. I wanted to have something to send my penpals. What better way than by doing this? I did a couple of one-page issues, and I'm not making any promises, but now I'm working on what hopefully will be 24 or 28 pages. All sorts of punk rock from all around the world. I think the review section has more 25 different countries represented, so I'm pretty excited about that. It brings me joy and pleasure and I love sending away to a band in Turkey or Greece, South Africa, Chile, you name it. Sending a zine and then getting a response and having this relationship. That's how it was when I was younger. We didn't have the internet, we didn't have this method of communication that was so easy.

MRR: I've tried to explain the concept of penpals to younger people. Back in the dark ages we wrote letters, traded tapes.
Craig: It's a beautiful thing. In the '90s, letter writing was a huge part of my life. I may have had problems in Boston, and my penpals were an amazing support system. Every day I was writing and sending letters and doing tape trades. I use to love going to the PO box and finding it stuffed full of letters from all over the world. I especially loved all the stamps. To this day, my relationships with many of my old penpals are as awesome and amazing as they ever were. The internet changed things and this was painful and difficult, yet I have adapted fairly well. I still correspond regularly with punks from all over the world. I value and cherish these individuals and, even today, many of them are still great friends of mine.

MRR: Besides doing your zine, you've also played in different bands. And one thing I noticed with Weapons Grade, your last band, is the lyrics seemed to be much more up-front and direct about your mental health issues. Also, what caused Weapons Grade to fall apart so quickly?
Craig: I've always talked about mental health issues in the lyrics that I've sung or screamed. In Melee, it was all over the lyrics, and in Keep Laughing as well. But, with Weapons Grade...in the past couple of years, my life's changed in ways I can't even describe. I went through this process we call "recovery," where I started to learn how to manage my symptoms. This is at age 33. That means for the previous 33 years, I did not know how to effectively manage my mental health. Some of the symptoms that I would have would be racing thoughts. I was incredibly impulsive and when you get a negative thought in your head and it's bouncing around going nuts and you're impulsive at the same time. One thing happens and it gets into my head and then the next thing happens and the next thing, and before I know it I feel like—I'll say it again—jumping off a



bridge. That is not where I wanted to be. With Weapons Grade, so much had changed in my life. I'd started this recovery process, my life was improving, I had a vision for the future for the first time in my entire life. I had hope for the first time. I believed I could become something more than I was, which is what I needed. A lot of the lyrics for Weapons Grade were me getting it out. Saying, "Yes, I have this scar" or, "Yes, I really messed up life, but that doesn't mean I can't move forward from here." And I talked about the recovery, which was this beautiful thing that I'd never heard of. In 33 years, I'd never heard of recovery in terms of mental illness and Weapons Grade was, for me, my mouthpiece. The reason why the band ended was because we had issues with keeping a stable lineup and we got to the point where we said this is getting too frustrating. And it *is* too bad. I loved playing in that band and I'd love to play music again.

MRR: Tell me about the training program you went through and your current work as a counselor. How did you get involved with that?
Craig: I went to a special school geared towards adults who have mental illness. Everyone in my class had a mental illness of some sort and it was college accredited, which meant that I have 27 credits right now that I'm going to have to do something with. That means I'll have to go back to school, which is a great motivation. And I really learned all about coping strategies, how the mind worked, about drugs and alcohol and addiction, communication skills. I think my communication skills have improved in ways that I cannot even really give enough attention to. I graduated school and I took a special test—the Certified Peer Specialist Exam—and I passed. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts recognizes it and I actually got to speak for one minute at the State House, which was quite amazing.

MRR: Was that in front of a committee or something?
Craig: An awards ceremony. But several of the senators and representatives were there.

MRR: What did you talk about in that minute?
Craig: I talked about how grateful I was for the experience of being able to go to the special school that I believed revolutionized my life and changed so much about how I viewed the world, myself, having a mental illness, my potential, my ability to change my life. I did an internship for six months at a very well respected day rehabilitation center. It completely honed my skills. I was working with members who came to the program for services. They have serious mental illness and the beautiful thing is that I do too. When I sit down with somebody…they can know that I'm on the level. I'm not some big person with a fancy degree who's saying, "OK, tell me about your mother." I'm saying, "All right, that sucks. I was in a group home too." That was how we broke through to people, and I was actually recognized in my recommendation for being able to connect with people, whether it was due to a psychiatric symptom or a language issue or some sort of other issue. I was very successful at it. My title is outreach worker, but that title has more to do with the funding from the state. Basically, I'm a mental health counselor, a peer counselor. My responsibilities include facilitating recovery-oriented groups. I have come up with an original curriculum and it has gone over very well. I facilitate about four different groups per week. I also do a lot of one-on-one talking with individual members offering support and discussing coping methods. I love my job and I cherish the feelings I get when I know that an individual and I have made a positive connection and when I know I have helped someone improve the quality of their life. This is emotional work, and sometimes I cry. These individuals know that I have had my own experiences with the negative effects having a mental illness can have on a person's life. It's not easy, but I am tough. This experience has been absolutely wonderful. I can't tell you enough how it feels to have gotten to this point in my life.

MRR: It's been said before, but it seems as though a lot of people into punk go into these types of human service professions, whether it's counseling or social work or teaching. Would you say it was punk or your own mental health issues or a combination of both that made you decide you wanted to do this?
Craig: I would say that without punk rock, I would almost certainly be dead. And I will say that my experiences in the punk scene have given me a perspective at work. My experience of going through the years of punk rock with all the crises that I had, and getting through it, surviving, standing up and facing the people I went nuts in front of. I had to stand up and say, "OK, I can't let this kill me, I can't let this destroy me." Is it by chance that so many people who've gone through the punk scene go into social work or education? I didn't know that was my path. I always wished it would be my path all those years: "Why can't I get a job, why can't I go to school, how am I ever going to take care of myself? I have all these great things to offer and an inability to get to that point." So I think a lot of people get into this work because it's their calling. I think that without my punk rock experience, I wouldn't be doing as well as I'm doing today.

MRR: Well, it seems to be a double-edged sword for you. It gives you a lot of happiness but, at times, it also seems to have caused you a lot of mental strain as well.
Craig: Well, I've taken a big step back, and that's fine. I'm 35 years old and I don't need to go to every show. I don't need to be liked by these 20-year-old kids and I don't need to know them, because what do I have in common with these people?

MRR: A lot of the time it's just music, which is very shallow.
Craig: It's very shallow. I'm not interested in having these shallow relationships. Why engage people you don't really need to have a relationship with? Sure, I booked shows for fifteen years. I think twelve years ago, it was killing me. But if you think about it, how did I get to where I'm at today? Booking shows was a huge part of it. For a person like me, who was sick for so long, I learned a lot of ways to work with people, how to manage, how to organize... Sure, in the mid-2000s, everything kind of fell apart, and thank goodness, now it's over and in the past. The last three years have been transformative. It wasn't easy having a mental illness my whole life, and going through the process of recovery and learning how to deal with it and live with it and let it be an asset instead of a detriment. I can speak very clearly and say that I would not change a thing about my life. I am grateful for everything that I've experienced, good, bad, horrible, disastrous, embarrassing, wonderful. What's important is that I made it—I still love punk rock, I'm happy, I'm healthy, I'm in control, and life has never been better. I believe empowerment is a huge component in recovery and living the life that we want to lead. I can look in the mirror and know that I am OK with myself. Changing your life into something better than it was is a very difficult thing to do. *Anyone* can have a mental illness. The statistics state that one in four people have a mental illness. A person can live a great life and then all of a sudden develop a mental illness. It could happen to you. People might think I am strange or different, but I am just one out of four. Most people are not getting effective treatment. I was one of those people for fifteen years.

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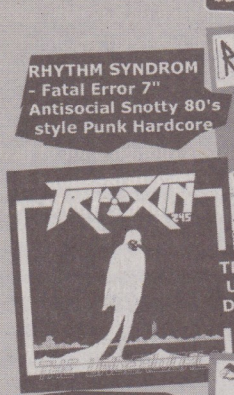

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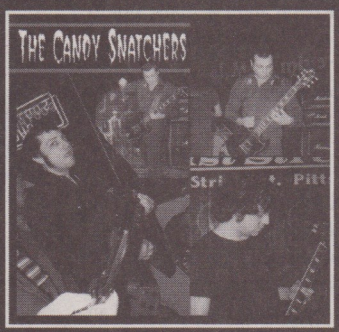

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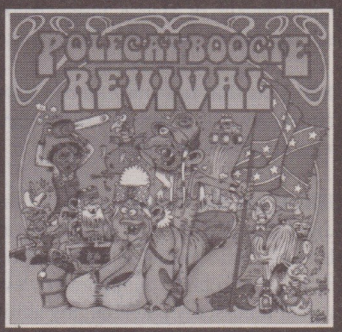

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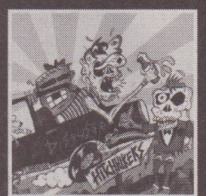

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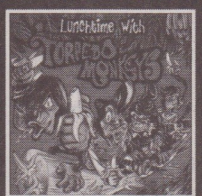

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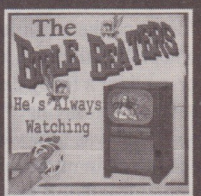

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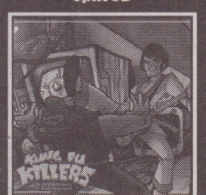

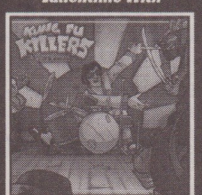

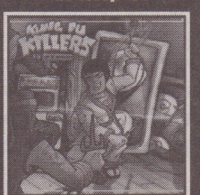

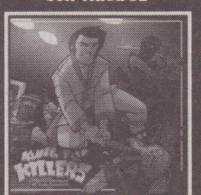

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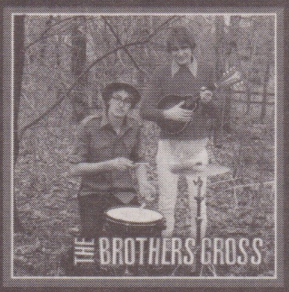

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MIKEY MIND

I've lived with Mikey aka Mike Napkin, aka mikey mind for over three years. I watched the saga of his digestive health begin, and come to a successful conclusion through diet and DIY fermentation. Also, it was important to both of us, as Lance's friends, to participate in this special issue of MRR, *and to spread tales of success and low-cost health maintenance tools. Interview by Erin Yanke in Portland, OR.*

MRR: Tell me about the beginning of your gut pain problem.
Mikey: I was at work in October of 2006 and suddenly my stomach cramped up painfully, in what I initially expected would be a short-lived case of explosive diarrhea. I went straight to the bathroom in hopes that purging my bowels would provide some sort of relief. Unfortunately nothing came out and no length of time on the toilet proved useful. I ended up doubled over in the break room completely unable to work, but also nearly unable to get off the couch and go home. Thankfully a sympathetic coworker was able to drive me home where I spent the rest of the day in bed while the pain came and went in waves. When I was finally able to sleep that I night, I hoped the pain had passed for good.

The next day I woke up at dawn with the same stomach pain but even worse, which I didn't think could be possible the day before. I worried that it might be my appendix. I called my dad, who is a doctor, for his opinion. He didn't suspect my appendix because of the exact location of the pain, but he recommended I get to a hospital for further evaluation.

That's when I woke you up and we drove to the emergency room with the shortest lines (thank you Matt Limo for that insider knowledge!) The doctor there asked me a bit about the situation, then asked me how bad the pain was on a scale of one to ten, one being no pain at all and ten being the worse pain I could possibly imagine. I answered, "Eight."

I was hooked up to a morphine drip to ease the pain and wheeled in for a CT scan of my abdomen that confirmed my appendix was fine, but offered no other constructive information. The doctor stuck her finger in my butt for the first of what would be four rectal exams I was given throughout the course of my illness. The first one was as unpleasant and uninformative as all those that would follow. I was left to lie around on morphine for a few hours, given a prescription for Vicodin, and eventually sent on my way—which was good because my band, Defect Defect, was scheduled to leave for a six-week tour that morning. We left four hours later than planned, and I got in the van, under the loft with a pillow and slept the whole way to our first show in Vancouver, BC.

MRR: You mentioned your dad was a doctor. What is your general health history?
Mikey: My general health history has a lot of sinus and ear problems in it, but never anything having to do with my digestive tract—or not that I knew at the time. I grew up with chronic ear infections in my earliest years, and throughout my adolescence every time I ever caught a cold I ended up with a sinus infection. Given my dad's profession and the abundance of antibiotics available to us, we would treat these sinuses infections—occurring a few times a year, if not more often—with antibiotics.

MRR: So then this stomach thing comes out of nowhere...How did you find out what it was?
From Canada, the tour took us south through California, where I abstained from one of my favorite tour activities—eating. I declined Mission burritos and homemade vegan breakfasts and instead sustained myself exclusively on Saltine crackers and creamed papaya. It was horrible.

In San Diego, where my family lives, I had an appointment to see one of my dad's doctor colleagues. This was the first occasion of three or four that I was asked to give a stool sample—which, for the uninitiated, means I got to shit in a plastic tray and then scrape the shit into vials of pink liquid using a wooden stick. And mind you, my bowel movements were anything but regular at that time. The results of that first stool sample were supposed to take a few days, but the doctor gave me a temporary diagnosis (the details of which I don't remember) and a prescription for antibiotics. I distinctly remember rejecting that diagnosis and telling my dad I was sure his doctor friend was wrong.

I declined to take the prescribed antibiotics, and continued east on tour eating just bland crackers while my bandmates rightfully dined on the region's delicious and plentiful Mexican food offerings. Somewhere in New Mexico or Texas the results of my stool sample came back, and confirmed that the San Diego doctor's diagnosis was off the mark. This was gratifying in one sense, to know that I had avoided an unnecessary course of antibiotics, but disheartening in another: I still didn't know what the hell was wrong with me!

It was then that my dad offered a diagnosis of his own: antibiotic-induced diarrhea. I had taken antibiotics to fend off a sinus infection about a month before all of my stomach problems arose, and he suspected that the two situations were directly related. Being that antibiotics work by killing bacteria of both the infectious and beneficial sort, it sometimes occurs that the resulting lack of beneficial organisms

in the colon causes diarrhea. My situation seemed far more complex and uncomfortable than any case of diarrhea, but the logic of his diagnosis seemed sound.

The proposed treatment, however, made me uneasy: stronger antibiotics. But by this point I was willing to try about anything that might make me feel better. I was eager to ease the constant discomfort, hopeful that I might make a bearable trip to the bathroom, and desperate to eat some decent food! And so I began a ten-day course of an intense antibiotic called metronidazole.

Within four or five days of beginning the treatment my stomach pain was nearly gone, I began shitting regularly (and shitting at all was incredible at the time), and I was finally able to eat real food! Unfortunately, the medication—which comes with a long list of potential side effects — made me feel like hell in whole new ways. I only remember that it made me feel completely miserable and tired all the time.

But at least I could eat, and in Philadelphia I treated myself to a delicious vegan "cheese steak" sandwich, which gave me the worst diarrhea I've ever had in my life. It struck at a particularly inopportune moment, just after playing a sweaty show on the third floor of an apartment building in Brooklyn. I still feel bad about barging ahead of the bathroom line, and leaving it in a rather unpleasant state for the poor guy at the front of the line after me. I assure you, man, it was urgent.

Thankfully that episode was a fluke—likely my body's response to a sudden influx of grease and gluten—and the rest of the tour continued without significant gastrointestinal incident.

MRR: So you finished the antibiotics and came home from tour...
Mikey: I finished the antibiotics and came home from tour, and within weeks, if not days, all of my gut problems reemerged: the urgent and debilitating pain, the inability to eat or shit. I was just beginning to overcome the misery of taking that drug when dad suggested per prevailing medical logic that I take it again—this time more of it, and for longer. The treatment hadn't lasted, but it worked the first time, so let's try again.

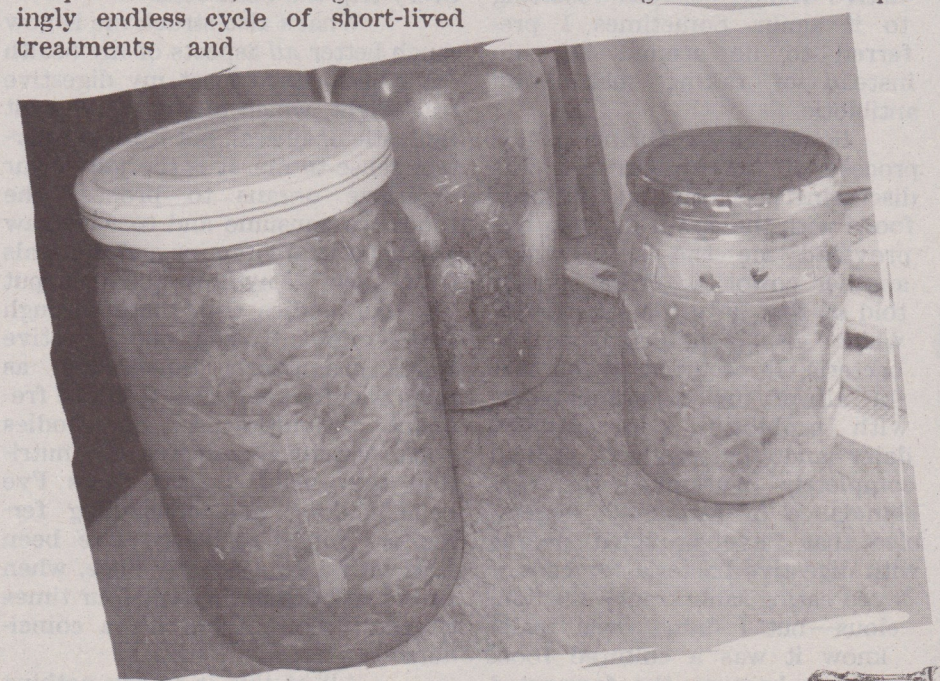
My second treatment with metronidazole was worse than the first. I didn't have to suffer all of the emotional effects of being sick on tour, but still I remember being more depressed and unhappy than before. I was miserable without cause or outside influence.

During this second bout of sickness I dedicated a huge amount of time to researching my symptoms and various possible diagnoses. The "antibiotic-induced diarrhea" that my dad had diagnosed turns out to be the result of infectious bacteria in the colon known as Clostridium Difficile, or C.diff for short. Antibiotics such as the ones I so often took for sinus infections kill nearly all the helpful microbes and organisms in a person's digestive tract, but they can't kill C.diff. So in the absence of competing organisms, C.diff thrives and reproduces and causes all the unpleasant symptoms I had been experiencing.

I spent hours reading about the condition online and in books, and learned that among other symptoms, recurrence is a particularly common trait of this infection. I read somewhere that with each successive treatment the chance of relapse increases, causing a seemingly endless cycle of short-lived treatments and recurrences. So the condition seems untreatable, at least by the conventional western medical remedies referred to in those documents.

MRR: But you work at a health food store that sells alternative health care products, and I remember you were exploring probiotics, right?
Mikey: The reading that I did about C.diff infection led me to better understand the importance of our bodies' digestive flora — the good bacteria that occupy our digestive tract and assist in all the of the functions of those various organs. I recalled a number of times being encouraged to eat yogurt after taking antibiotics, to replenish the supplies of good bacteria lost in that process. It finally occurred to me that I had been killing off my body's digestive organisms with antibiotics nearly my whole life, but I never made any real effort to replace those good bacteria. I had been creating a nearly perfect environment for an infectious bacterium like C.diff to thrive.

So I began researching beneficial bacteria and trying to repopulate my digestive tract. I learned all I could about the science of digestive organisms and some of the foods that provide them. I bought all varieties of pro-



biotic supplements, each with its own claims to potency and stability and viability. I tried dozens of yogurts and other fermented dairy and soy products, always looking for those with the greatest active culture content. A co-worker gave me some homemade raw kefir—an intensely probiotic-rich cultured dairy drink. I drank kombucha—a popular fermented tea drink known to contain probiotic cultures—off of store shelves and friends' home creations. I tried various combinations of these cultured foods and drinks before, during, and after antibiotic use. I took fistfuls of supplements at various hours of the day and night.

Sometimes I would remain in good health for a couple months before relapsing, but the symptoms always seemed to come back. I remember curling up in the fetal position, lying in bed unable to cope with the pain while my roommates or my girlfriend at the time took care of me. I went to two or three free medical clinics in Portland (and one in Vancouver, BC) in search of more information, but never received anything more helpful than just another prescription for metronidazole. I so hated the side effects of the drug, and the dependence on it for my well-being, that I would try any alternative remedy before resorting to it again. Sometimes I preferred to lie around in pain instead of taking that damn antibiotic.

Sometime during this process of trial-and-error I was discussing probiotics and cultured foods with the coworker who had provided me the kefir, when another coworker sitting nearby told us that he made sauerkraut, which also contains beneficial bacteria. It occurred to me that for all of my experimentation with probiotics and cultured dairy and soy products, I had completely overlooked the vast abundance of fermented vegetables that have provided people with digestive bacteria for eons. I loved eating sauerkraut—it's delicious—but I didn't even really know it was a cultured food. That's because the fermented vegetables most commonly available to us—pickles and sauerkraut — are most often created today with vinegar instead of by traditional fermentation methods. The results are delicious and shelf-stable, but not nearly as healthful as their predecessors.

I pressed my coworker for the details of sauerkraut making, and he explained the simple task to me. I did a bit more research, looked up a couple of highly acclaimed books, and soon thereafter started my own batch of sauerkraut in a bucket in my girlfriend's closet. The process takes a few weeks, so in the meantime I sought out raw, unpasteurized sauerkraut for sale wherever I could find it, and very quickly noticed the difference it made in my digestion. When my own kraut had fermented long enough to sample, I would eat small bowls of it often and take note of the effects it seemed to have on my digestive tract.

In time I would learn that regular consumption of fermented vegetables like sauerkraut and traditional brine pickles — and the infinite variations on those two basic foods — keep my digestive tract flushed with beneficial bacteria, which seems to be exactly what they need. I'm no longer in pain, and my bowel movements are the best they've ever been, which is a far more rewarding feeling than you can imagine, having for so long dreaded every trip the bathroom.

What's also struck me is how much better *all* aspects of my health have been since I set my digestive tract right, which might sound a bit fantastic or unreal, but it makes perfect sense to me. It is the job of our digestive organs to process the foods we consume and to withdraw any beneficial vitamins and minerals from them. Anything good we put into our bodies gets there through those organs. When our digestive tracts are poorly functioning, as mine was for years as a result of frequent antibiotic use, our bodies don't necessarily receive the nutrition they need. In the years I've been making and consuming fermented foods regularly, I've been sick with a cold exactly once, when I used to be sick three or four times a year. I don't think it's a coincidence.

All of this is to say nothing of how delicious fermented foods like sauerkraut are, the many various forms they take, their deep cultural origins, or what an enriching and creative process it can be to create them. There have been many other articles, websites, and books dedicated to these many facets of fermented foods. I highly recommend *Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition, and Craft of Live-Culture Foods,* by Sandor Ellix Katz, available from Chelsea Green Publishing. It provides detailed instructions for creating fermented and cultured foods of all varieties, presented in a way that is entirely accessible and easy to follow. Katz's basic kraut and pickle recipes can also be found on his website: www.wildfermentation.com. The book began as a zine, and I've seen a few old copies floating around radical bookstores, zine libraries, and show spaces across the country, so you could keep an eye out for it in that form as well.

Mike wants to talk about kraut and fermentation! Send email to mikenapkin@gmail.com. Send real mail to: PO Box 2991, Portland, OR 97208.

SNIP & TIE With Chris Colohan

Chris Colohan is the former vocalist of Left for Dead, The Swarm, Ruination. He now sings for Cursed. I interviewed Chris after a Cursed show in Montreal. This was originally intended for a zine that I was going to publish about vasectomies and men's health.

Interview by Kyle F.
crushkyledestroy@hotmail.com

MRR: All right, I guess let's start by hearing a little about you.
Chris: My name is Chris, I live in Toronto, Ontario, I play punk music. I had a vasectomy a couple of years ago.

MRR: Do you want to say why you chose to get one?
Chris: Yeah, that's probably a really long answer. It's something I wanted to do since I was about 18, but you can't really know that shit when you're 18, and everybody always says, "wait until you're older," so I guess I was 27 when I finally did it. I was living here in Montreal, and I went back to Ontario because it's covered there with your health care. I was single at the time, and just really resolute that I never want to have kids. A lot of it has to do with the way I grew up and my own situation with my mother and biological father, a lot of which comes out in our music and songs. I never met him until I was like 20 years old. I grew up with a lot of resentment and weird feelings about it and I guess as I got older I started to realize I could make all the same mistakes. But my Mom was like 30 when she had me. Anybody can make those mistakes when they're a teenager, or anytime. And I'm really no different or less susceptible to making really big mistakes, or really simple biological mistakes. I just figure that I don't owe it to any biological imperative to add one more person to a world of things that I can't control and am really cynical about. I think bringing a kid into the world is good if you have the right disposition and you are sure you can handle it. I'd never get a dog until I knew was going to be in the same place for the life of a dog, let alone a person. There's so many things that we even see right now that are scary as hell, whether or not we choose to look at them. Just the scarcity—the entirety of history is all about people fighting over resources. People have probably always thought about their generation, that it's the most fucked up it's ever been, but I really think that we're going to see, in our time, the end of diplomacy between a lot of nations, which has happened before, but now the stakes are always so much higher. We're going to see the end of our natural resources, and things that have been running out for a long time, but we have chosen to do nothing, or not enough, about it, or not enough people have done enough about it to really change it. There are things like that, that are totally beyond my control, and I can't justify bringing a child into the world when I don't know if it's going to get raped or murdered or grow up when there's no water left or no air to breathe and bombs and rocks being thrown everywhere. And we live in, you know, this is the "good" part of the world. There's so many other reasons, like the fact that people make kids and they just take out their own problems therapeutically using a kid like it's a piece of play-dough, like a little version of themselves. When I used to picture having a kid—I can easily picture it, because anyone can do it—I always picture a little boy, and that tells me, in my head, that I'm probably thinking about myself. A lot of people probably do that when they have a kid. And by the same token, there are a lot of people who

have a completely healthy history and experience of what family means, and I don't expect that everyone should think the same way about it. But it's something that, when I'm really serious about shit, I'm really serious about it, so I don't mind kind of etching it into stone. I don't know that I wouldn't impose so many of my own ways on a child whether I was aware of it or not. *(Radwan, Cursed guitarist, walks by and yells, "It didn't hurt"!)* And it didn't really hurt at all, if anyone's thinking about it. Go to Ontario, if you live there already, it's covered under your health care and it takes about half an hour. I took photographs of it myself; I didn't use a general anesthetic so that I could take pictures. It was pretty funny, I had to lie a lot to get it. I said I was with somebody for a long time, which I had been but I wasn't at that point, so I just sort of stuck with all that. They don't like to think that you're doing it for these kinds of reasons. So, it's not really that easy if you're relatively young and you haven't had kids, which makes sense—they don't want to do something that you're going to have to pay (if it's even possible, which I don't know if it is, the way I had it done) for reversals, which aren't certain and cost a ton of money, whereas vasectomies are easy and cheap, so they want to weed out people as they are getting them done.

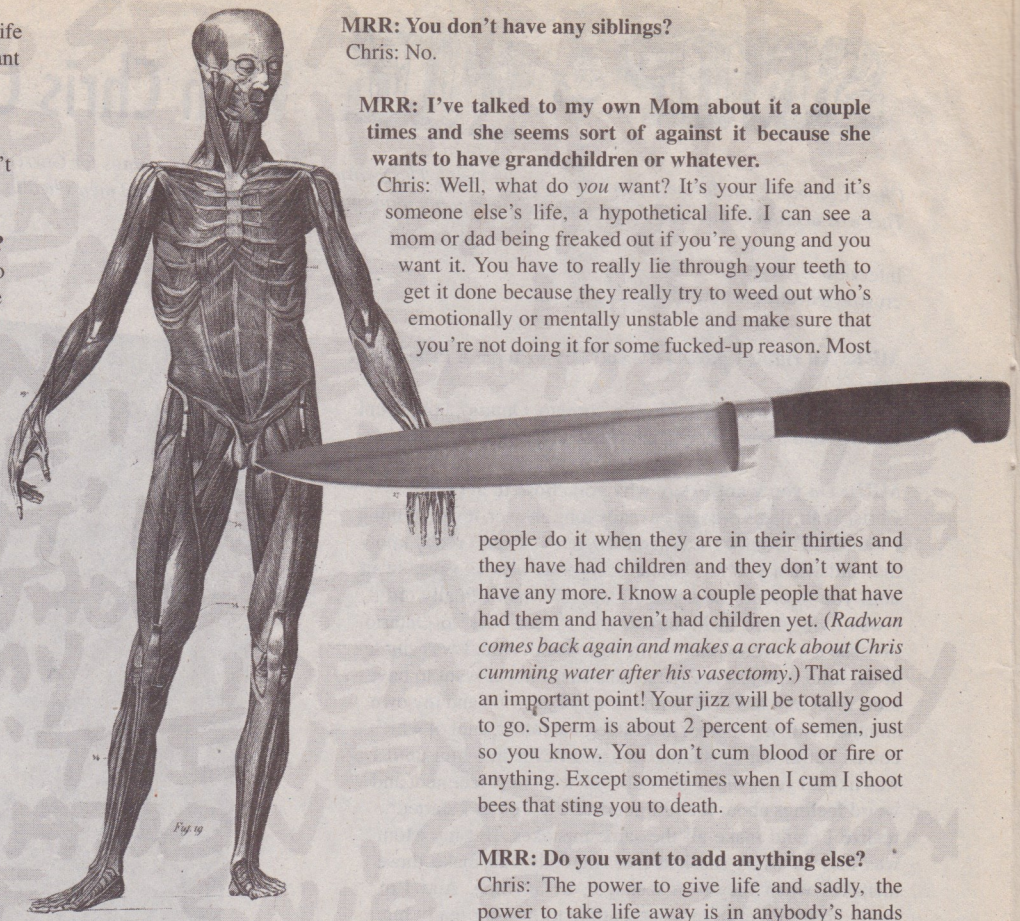
MRR: Did you have it done with the scalpel or without?
Chris: They cut a hole in my ball sack and they pulled out the vas. I went somewhere with some certain technique—they make a hole and stretch it, they pull the vas out each side, I think they clip it, they cauterize the inside so it makes a wall of tissue, and they clamp it off with something. So as far as I know a piece is cut out and there's a whiff of smoke that smells like such shit. It's a really weird trip to see something from the inside of your body on the outside of your body, while you're awake and looking down at your

balls especially, and that that's the thing that gives life to people. It's pretty heavy; it makes you sort of want to throw up.

MRR: You're married now, correct?
Chris: Yeah. I wasn't when I got it done, and it wouldn't really make much difference.

MRR: Have you talked to your wife about it at all?
Chris: A lot of people always say "I never want to have kids," but obviously anybody who's going to be serious enough to get involved with somebody who has had a vasectomy has to really mean it. My wife really feels the same way and I guess it's one of the reasons that we work really well together because we really both don't, for pretty much the same reasons. It's not about hating children or anything; on the contrary, it's more about respecting what life is and isn't. To not play God with people. There are more reasons for me not to do it than to just do it because that's what people do. I don't think it's not thought out, I've lost enough sleep in my life worrying about things happening in the world and what I'm supposed to do with myself. When I was 18 it probably would have been a bad time to do it and I might have regretted it, but I sure don't now, and I can't see ever really regretting it.

MRR: Has your mother given you any grief about it?
Chris: She found out a really fucking weird way. I've had sort of a history with operations with my balls. When I was 15 I had a twisted testicle and I had to have surgery on it. And then when I was 24 or 25 I had a cyst on the same bad-luck ball, the right one, and I had to have surgery on that. I had a trans-scrotal piercing that got lost inside of me and is still somewhere inside of me, and now I have another one, and the vasectomy. We were all sitting down eating, me and my wife got married just on this random thing on a Monday morning and dealt with all the bullshit afterward of everybody being pissed off about it. We were sitting down talking and it sort of slipped out, because I had talked to her about it a lot of times and the first time I told her she said, "I thought you did that years ago and just never told me." And I was like "All right, good, just stay with that, Mom," because I love my mom, she's great. We've always been the only ones there. I grew up with just my mother and me, so it's kind of hard, because whenever anything goes wrong the only person there to yell at and get in fights with is the other person. But at the same time she raised a child on her own from pretty much poverty and worked herself up. She was a teacher and she just busted her ass to raise a kid and I have to respect that. It's a really hard thing in your head too because you think that they're going to take it really personally... I mean, it's the end of your bloodline, when you're an only child especially. That's what that means for me, but that's kind of what I want. She didn't flip out, but she understands my motives, and we talk about a lot of things pretty openly. If I was a mother I probably wouldn't want to hear it too badly, but understanding where I come from, I think she's all right with it.



"Got cut, along the line. Got cut, and opened wide. And opened wide. And opened wide. Got cut, right where the people come out. Took a scalpel to my doubts. I found the glitch and pulled it out. They cut the right wire when they cut the white wire. Diffused the time bomb. With no apologies to hypothetical tragedies. Got cut. One less heart to break. One less mind to rape. One less victim. One less grave. You'll never have my eyes. You'll never blame my hands. One less victim, one less grave."

—"Negative Two Point Five" from the Cursed album, *One*.

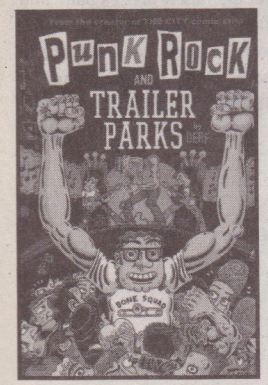
MRR: You don't have any siblings?
Chris: No.

MRR: I've talked to my own Mom about it a couple times and she seems sort of against it because she wants to have grandchildren or whatever.
Chris: Well, what do *you* want? It's your life and it's someone else's life, a hypothetical life. I can see a mom or dad being freaked out if you're young and you want it. You have to really lie through your teeth to get it done because they really try to weed out who's emotionally or mentally unstable and make sure that you're not doing it for some fucked-up reason. Most people do it when they are in their thirties and they have had children and they don't want to have any more. I know a couple people that have had them and haven't had children yet. (*Radwan comes back again and makes a crack about Chris cumming water after his vasectomy.*) That raised an important point! Your jizz will be totally good to go. Sperm is about 2 percent of semen, just so you know. You don't cum blood or fire or anything. Except sometimes when I cum I shoot bees that sting you to death.

MRR: Do you want to add anything else?
Chris: The power to give life and sadly, the power to take life away is in anybody's hands and I'm not saying that if I write songs about it, or talk about it, or whatever, that it's for everybody. Different people have different lives and experiences of what family means or love means. Some people really want to have a kid, a house, a dog and a minivan. Some people do that and it's awesome. I have friends that have kids that are great. I have a goddaughter. My best friend from high school asked me to be a godfather; I can't even handle the god part, but symbolically for what that means, you want to have your good friends that you respect around your kids as they grow up. That was a lot of pressure; I had to really think about that because if something happens to my friend, I'm responsible for the child. That's just a godparent and that's really hard, you know? Anybody that's going to do that you don't even get to think about it—because a lot of people, even with their mom and dad and a happy family—usually the actual act of making a baby happens by accident and then people just deal with it. Vasectomy isn't for everybody. Look into it, find information on it, definitely think about it if you're really young, because you can always not do it and then do it later, but you can't so easily not have done it later if you regret it. Do your own thing.

After the interview Chris told me about how after the vasectomy procedure it takes approximately 20 ejaculations for your fluid to be free of sperm. The photographs of all 20 of these ejaculations can be found in the epilogue of Chris' book. For more information on Chris, his book, photography and musical projects, check out www.your-funeral.com

BOOKS



Punk Rock and Trailer Parks
By Derf
152 Pages • $15.95
SLG Publishing

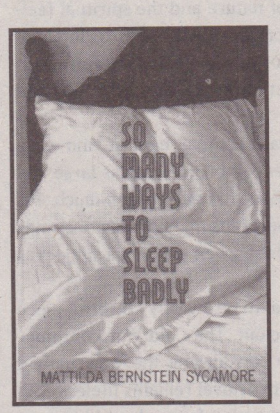
Over Christmas, I went to my hometown of Marshall, Texas to see my father. It's a small town, so, of course, all the punks know each other and, of course, most don't visit there any more on account of it being too painful. One night, I met up with a couple of kids who were around, one who was stuck there on probation after doing time for a robbery and the other who was just passing through from Austin. On our way walking downtown to get some beers, some cowboys in a truck took the time to admire our fashion sensibilities and shower us with glass bottles, yelling as they drove away. It made me really sad for the kid who's stuck there by order of the state. It was that kind of alienation that started his drug habit, and situated his armed robbery to begin with. I guess people are still threatened by punk in some places, and that is the joy and sadness of *Punk Rock and Trailer Parks*.

Derf, the author/illustrator of this graphic novel, presents us a historic fictional account of a Tolkien-quoting, high school nerd discovering the birth of the local punk scene while living in a small town trailer park just outside of Akron, Ohio. Beautifully drawn in pen and ink, his art is in the same comix style of his weekly strip *The City* (to those unfamiliar, the black and white pictures are perhaps closest on the iconic spectrum to Robert Crumb). The contrast between these comix-stylized characters and the realism of the high school alienation that gives material impetus for so many people to continue to seek out and create punk communities (and gangs) makes for a sad comedy. As I laughed through our narrator Otto Pizcok's misfortunes, I was driven to reflect on my own lack of confidence in those days and how becoming involved in punk gave me the youthful bravado and empowerment to fight back.

The shows at The Bank and interactions with musicians like Wendy O. Williams, Claus Nomi, and the Ramones serve as spaces to rethink the small town dramas that drive the narrative. Otto carries us through his all too familiar world, where a pregnant fundamentalist Christian is mocked at school, the union grandfather has his driving privileges revoked for drunkenly running down the mayor's racist 'lawn jockey', and a man who is tired of being forced to watch *Hee-Haw* fills his anal cavity with 'plastic explosives.' Otto isn't a perfect anti-hero; most of his interactions with women classmates are not the most positive and in some cases come off a bit creepy. In attempting to interact with those who rejected him, he throws himself into voyeuristic and exhibitionist situations, which were unfortunate but funny.

To add to the realism, one gets the impression the author was actually at 'The Bank' shows, if not because of his attention to the details of the setting, then for the fact that the work's protagonist bares remarkable resemblance to the author himself. I think this adds an important value to the work, since it makes it more than just a funny book; it becomes a kind of history. For the most part, punk history has expanded over the years and gotten away from the New York and L.A. centrism that dominated the large publisher non-fiction that came out in the 90s. Even with the books, websites, and films that cover the early scenes of Austin, Chicago, and other cities around the world, however, histories of the small town punk scenes that thrive on road trips to the city and shows in welding supply storage sheds have largely continued to go undocumented (with the exception of the epic stories that get passed down through oral tradition or zines to the youth imprisoned in those towns). *Punk Rock and Trailer Parks* expands a little on that history by using a different medium with great success. With acknowledgment of the story's partial truths, the humor takes on a tragic element that will probably leave small town ex-pats nostalgic and give everyone else a peek into what it might have been like.

—Zane Grant



So Many Ways To Sleep Badly
Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore
246 pages • $16
City Lights Books
261 Columbus Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94133

Gender-bending queer activist and *MRR* columnist Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore has unleashed a doozy of a stream-of-consciousness autobiography? Semi-autobiography? On an unsuspecting reading public. The words and revolution fly fast and furious from Sycamore's keyboard. She writes some of the most evocative, descriptive prose around. It's often dense in detail but reads as light as an Alistair MacLean thriller. She makes this literary sleight-of-hand seem effortless too—a feat no doubt envied by many other writers (including myself, sigh).

That said, this book is repetitive, self-absorbed, and extremely difficult to finish. I've had my review copy for months, missing deadline after deadline, unsure if I wanted to bother writing this review. The book's press material calls *So Many Ways To Sleep Badly* a novel, but it's clearly (at the very least) semi-autobiographical. That's just semantics- the book is written as a stream-of-consciousness autobiography, so that's how us readers have to approach it. Obviously, autobiographies by definition involve a certain amount of self-absorption and self-awareness. A talent like Sycamore should be able to write an autobiography that avoids the genre's obvious pitfall of self-indulgence.

On the surface, the book should be action-packed and engrossing. After all, it involves a lot of cum, cockroach-infested apartments, fibromyalgia, 3am musings, lovers' fights, radical queer politics, spun out friends, Polk Street hustlers, and the seedy underbelly of society familiar to any reader of Bukowski and Burroughs.

But once the reader starts to slog through the book, one realizes that, for instance, Bukowski knew the power of a good editor. For Sycamore's literary career I hope she recognizes her need for a firm editor (either herself or a trusted compatriot) quickly. This book should've been 45 pages maximum, or had 200 pages of dynamic story lines and scene changes added to it. Don't get me wrong, I love artistic repetition, exhibit A is the music of Flipper, but this book contains neither the simplicity nor the focus needed to pull off a prose version of that band.

Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore can write rings around most current younger writers, and I'm looking forward to reading more of her work. Unfortunately, instead of the autobiography/novel she intended, this book's apparently complete lack of editing means it comes off as a narcissistic speed freak's diary.

—Jesse Luscious

The Man Who Saw His Own Liver
Bradley R. Smith
144 pages • $15
Nine Banded Books
www.ninebandedbooks.com

Bradley R. Smith's book, *The Man Who Saw His Own Liver*, is a novelized version of his one-act play entitled *The Man Who Stopped Paying*. Written in 1983, the subject matter is largely fixated around the Cold War and the trouble that the narrator, A. K. Swift, encounters when navigating the frightening world of nuclear warfare and personal survival. As a war veteran in his forties, Swift is deeply troubled by the

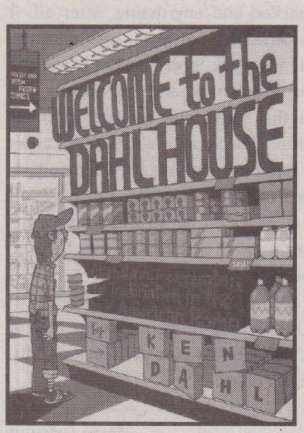
threat of nuclear demise and the global powers that create and fund the Cold War. He decides that tax resistance is the only form of protest available to him, yet falls short of properly executing this when he fails to file any tax forms at all and stops attending meetings of the War Tax Resistance Group. Swift is unable to effectively change the world around him and it is this impotence that reoccurs throughout the book.

Narrated entirely from his garage, Swift presents his thoughts on these matters through vignettes of time and memory, giving the novel a poetic and prose-like feeling. Through his storytelling, the reader is taken outside of the garage and into the natural world as Swift describes his drives through scenic Southern California. He creates a pastoral realm with his descriptions of nature and the spiritual feelings it invokes, and the juxtaposition of these descriptions with ones technological terror heightens the absurdity that Swift thinks of the Cold War. The eerie stillness that Smith creates is akin to the chilling protest novels of Dalton Trumbo and Tim O'Brien.

Swift yearns for a simpler time when his fate was personal, natural, and within his control. He is out of his element in the presence of something as large and eclipsing as a nuclear arms race. Ultimately, Swift does not accomplish much. His thoughts are aimless and without a clear focus, however his inaction demonstrates the feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that arise when tackling a subject as tough as global warfare.

The Man Who Saw His Own Liver has the potential to be a vastly powerful piece of literature, and yet falls short of carrying much clout. The Cold War continues to be a topic that begs for discussion, especially considering the war-charged atmosphere that is present today, yet somehow Smith's novel remains lifeless. The vignettes that Smith uses makes the story disjointed and unfocused, and removes much of the spark that could be ignited by this subject. Swift tends to speak to the reader too directly, hitting us over the head with his meaning instead of artfully showing it to us. And Smith deploys careless language when discussing oppressed groups of people, including the Jewish and Africans, and comes across as chauvinistic when speaking of his wife. By doing so, he makes Swift's character unlikable, which is a hard tactic to pull off well considering that Swift is our only real character in the whole book. The novel as a whole mirrors Swift's struggle throughout the book—ultimately and unfortunately ineffective.

—Krista Ciminera



Welcome to the Dahl House
Kenneth Dahl
122 pages • $6.00
Microcosm Publishing
222 S. Rogers St.
Bloomington, IN 47404
www.microcosmpublishing.com

Welcome to the Dahl House collects ten years' worth (1997-2007) of Ken Dahl's (the "nom-de-cartoon" of Gabby Schulz) comics into one slightly larger than pocket-sized anthology. This is a good thing considering that to otherwise get one's hands on the entirety of this decade-spanning work would be nearly impossible; this anthology includes all of his minis, short stories, anthology works and previously unpublished work.

Immediately, thanks to his scathing social and political commentary and cranky-old-punk-ass attitude, I could relate to where Ken's coming from, even if my version of sticking it to Hot Topix (by never having been to one) is different than Ken's—literally sticking it to a Hot Topix employee with a kitchen knife in the gut. Ouch, the brutality on the very first page!

By page seven, I was hooked. The artwork is detailed, tight, and oozes talent. The various narratives reveal sharp wit, existential crisis, and at times, heavy emotion. The pages turn fast through different styles, scenes and themes like suicide, comic-zinester self-reflexivity, and vibrating dildos sticking out of a guy's bloody, exposed brain. Brutality again by page 19! The guest appearance by the Sergeant, (drawn amazingly similar from frame to frame—a sign of a true cartoonist) from the long-time running Sunday funny papers comic strip *Beetle Bailey* delivers a contemptuous, agitprop style political commentary of the U.S. Army.

"Paul", a 5-page short story, explores natural, healthy, sexual expression between two young friends. Call it friends with benefits, but it's really pure-intentioned early sexual awareness and experimentation, borne out of both mimicry and innocent childhood inquisitiveness.

At his most entertaining, Ken Dahl illustrates irony well alongside hilarious text-based scorn; he does this through Gordon Smalls, a (somewhat autobiographical?) character who plays host to a series of several DIY-style skillshare stories, the most amazing of which is the 27 page "Gordon Smalls Goes to Jail".

In Ken's most recent comics, his artistic talent matures with its exciting ability to combine several styles through one narrative – the text of which too has grown into masterful cartoon-style dialogues. This maturation is most evident in a 6-page short story titled "Time Travel Trip-Up".

Throughout *Welcome to the Dahl House*, you can feel the lonely artist's pain, and he does apologize for this at the end of I Will Die Alone with a tiny rectangle in the bottom corner that says "My Sincerest Apologies", drawn in there like a P.S. at the end of a handwritten letter. The painful self-awareness escalates to the end and in the last short story of the book, Gordon Smalls Hurts Himself, the aging skate-punk-comic-zinester has an existential crisis that I suspect quite a number of us fellow aging skate-punk-zinesters can empathize with.

—Jessica Mills

Landmarks in the Desert
Kent Winslow
206 pages • $10?
The Match
PO Box 3012
Tucson, AZ
85702

New book here, from the editor, publisher and printer of *The Match*, the journal of "ethical anarchism", established in 1969. As any reader of *The Match* can attest, this author is absolutely dedicated to individual freedom. The book has no bar code, no ISBN, and no price listed. Further, and this is the intense part – the book was set by hand. No computers, no overseas printers. I believe that he also disapproves of banks and checks. The author is, as you should have surmised, not fucking around. A lifer. And here is his piecemeal memoir, "Reflecting on the passage of years I am led to remember the various acts of protest and resistance in which I've expressed the central makeup of my personality."

Physically and aesthetically, the book is a welcome marvel. Vividly full color cover art of death leading an old man, and fonts that you probably won't find in a hip young graphic designer's laptop. A lovely blue inking across the top of the pages. But books are for reading, you may be thinking, and necessity forces us into the content.

Landmarks in the Desert is a 15-chapter work, more autobiography than fiction – "Any resemblance between persons mentioned in this book, and actual persons, living or dead, is not only not coincidental, it is fully intentional, and I would be heartbroken if it were in the slightest degree imperfect." I haven't read the preceding volume, *Dream World*, that came out 20 years ago, but I imagine it similar in tone—maybe a bit aggrandizing and crotchety but not without a few good stories. It's not as meandering as John Fahey's books, but the late bluegrass musician's two autobiographies would be a valid reference point.

The chapters are fairly short – childhood experiments with dynamite, cat traps, radio electronics, and bitter reflections at the funeral of a parent. Like a relative cornering you at a party or an older activist lambasting the young impatient ones, you may not care to stick around. His merciless description of his mother in the very first chapter, "overfed slugs like herself in whom the mysterious blossom of rebelliousness, independence—in a word, *dignity*—had never taken root. Her tiny, piggish eyes, set amid the seams of a browned and puffy face, glanced about stupidly from atop an obese, slatternly body", soured me to the rest of the book. No doubt he has his reasons for bitterness, and his lack of patience and tolerance is consistent with his grail-like quest for life outside of control. The prices paid for life decidedly outside of society comes across here.

It's not all a jeremiad towards cops, academics and citizens. There's a rare, tender reminiscence in "Dead End Trails" wherein our narrator shares a bed on a wintry night. In the last chapter, he rescues an abandoned dog. Things could have been very different, each tale seems to say in its own fierce way. And the book does read better than most anarcho-debates. Can I recommend it though? You'll have to make your own *independent* decision on that one, friend.

—Travis Fristoe

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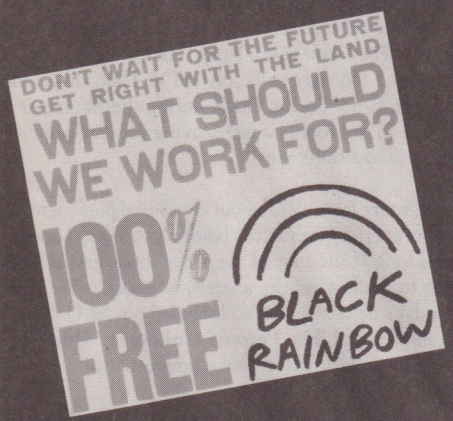

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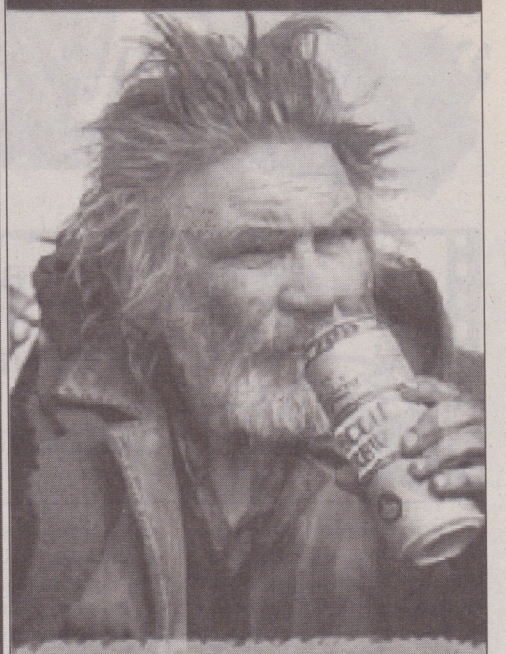

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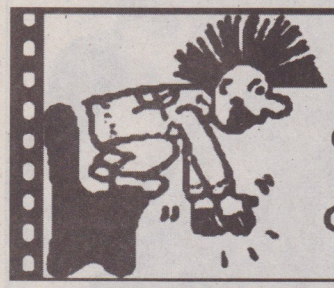


BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

As the President of the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™, it is that time of the year when I release our list of best films of 2008 in order to influence Academy nominations. Elsewhere in this issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* the shitworkers are listing their favorite records, so why not join in on the fun?

It was an unusually bad year for film going. Every time I'd think I want to go to the movies, I'd look at the listings and quickly decide to stay home. So the list this year leans heavily toward DVD releases. But that's OK, it will be easier for you to track them down.

Here is the list of the Punk Roåck Film Critics Association™ best films of 2008.

1. The Last Pogo

The main problem with revisionist punk rock documentaries besides the predictable selection of talking heads is that the film always misses the excitement and the energy of the time. The commentators are too busy trying to convey to you how great it was, but unless you were there, it is hard to believe them because there is nothing interesting backing up their claims. You find yourself constantly waiting for that obscure fifteen-second shot of The Stimulators in 1980 and then having to suffer through ten more minutes of chatter. Which is why it is a special pleasure when a film like **The Last Pogo** pops up and shows you what was really happening because it was shot at the time. All of it. **The Last Pogo** documents the last night punk rock at the Horseshoe Tavern in Toronto, Canada on December 1, 1978. Each of the bands playing: The Scenics, The Cardboard Brains, The Secrets, The Mods, The Ugly, The Viletones, and Teenage Head perform one song. The camerawork and sound are excellent with the exception of Teenage Head's sound which was due to their manager not allowing the mixing board sound to be used. There are interviews with bands, bookers, other bands, and audience members. The police break up the night and a riot ensues. Even though it is not captured on film, the excitement and aftermath is. Even though it is only 26 minutes long or perhaps because it is, **The Last Pogo** is an excellent document of punk. (www.thelastpogo.net)

2. X-Ray Visions

After what I just said about the lameness of after-the-fact punk documentaries, my praise of **X-Ray Visions** could seem contradictory. But **X-Ray Visions** does the obscure, nostalgia documentary the correct way. This is not a documentary to teach the kids about how great things were back in the day. This is a film for those who were there and have fond, or not so fond, memories of the place. If others happen to enjoy it too that's fine, but that's not the main goal. **X-Ray Visions** tells the story of the X-Ray Café an all-ages music venue in Portland, OR, which existed from 1989-1994. It is filled with stories of the start, rise, and fall of the club. People tell the stories as they remember them only to be contradicted by someone else's recollection of the same event. The "truth" may never be known, even to those present, but the memory is always subjective. Instead of trying to figure it out, all perspectives are given. Why the X-Ray Café didn't last is unfortunately made clear by lack of audiences at some of the filmed shows and even by one patron's admission that he never paid to get in. (www.microcosmpublishing.com)

3. Flipper Live - TargetVideo77 1980-1981

In the record reviews section this month you'll see lots of praise for the reissues of all the Flipper records. I will maintain my stance that Flipper was a band to see live. This DVD offers two perspectives of their live experience: a relatively small headlining show at Berkeley Square in 1980 and as the opening act for Throbbing Gristle at Kezar Stadium in 1981. At both shows Flipper is amazing. I think they might actually freak Genesis P-Orridge out too. (www.targetvideo.com)

4. Vicky Cristina Barcelona

I am one of the few who still goes to see Woody Allen films when they are first released in the theater. While they are always enjoyable, none in the recent years have come close to **Vicky Cristina Barcelona**. In what seems like it could be your average romantic triangle comedy, the film quickly turns into something more. Allen uses typical film cliches, but then turns them around. Nothing ends up the way you would expect, which is rare for a somewhat mainstream film. Everyone in the film seems intelligent and makes realistic choices. The conservative tone of the ending is also a surprise.

5. Tad: Busted Circuits and Ringing Ears

The idea of a documentary about Tad seemed like a funny idea when I first heard about it. Not exactly number one on everyone's list when it comes to grunge bands of the '90s, but after seeing this documentary they should be. It's the interesting story of Tad Doyle, a drummer who learns to play guitar and starts writing songs. He releases a record on Sub Pop. then gets a band. They are marketed as backwoods lumberjacks and deemed too ugly to be on MTV. Then drugs and major label nonsense break up the band. Seeing Doyle during the filming of a music video sitting in a chair tied to the roof of a fast moving car cracks me up every time too. (www.kingofheartproductions.com)

6. Angry Brigade

Angry Brigade is a BBC documentary from 1973 about the Stoke Newington 8 trial where a group of anarchists were tried for various bombings around London. It is a surprisingly very balanced look at the start of the group interviewing both sides and seemingly attempting to understand the anarchists' actions. Seeing it in 2008 is a stark contrast to today's news styles. Also included on the DVD is a shorter documentary about a similar trial **The Persons Unknown**, which features the only filmed footage of Crass playing live. (www.pmpress.org)

7. Warts & All - The Films Of Danny Plotnick

A collection of all the 8mm films and one 16mm film made by Danny Plotnick between 1986 and 2001. Most of the films could probably be construed as mere goofing off with friends on camera if the films weren't so entertaining. It helps that Plotnick has talented friends who are willing to act in his films and that he knows how to film them. From a hard partying sock monkey to some highway bullies who love their pasta there is probably something here for everyone. (www.dannyplotnick.com)

8. Milk

Milk is an interesting portrayal of San Francisco in the '70s and the story of Harvey Milk. It is also a condemnation of our political times. In the '70s even Ronald Reagan spoke out in opposition to discriminating against gays and lesbians before he ran for president. This past election even Barrack Obama would not, or could not, speak out against California's state constitutional amendment to make gay marriage illegal. It is shocking how much we have regressed. Yet, **Milk** still seems to inspire.

9. Star Struck

Though not released nor even reissued this year, it was a new discovery for me and became one of my favorite films of the year. **Star Struck** is an Australian film from 1982 that has a very new wave feel to it. Jackie is a singer whose cousin Angus writes songs for her and attempts to make her into a star. They both live with their mothers and grandmother above a family run pub, which runs into financial problems when Angus's dad runs off with all the money. There is singing, extremely funny dance sequences and even an all-male synchronized swimming scene. It is just too enjoyable.

10. Joy Division

Grant Gee's ultimate fan film of Joy Division. It tells the story without falling into the usual trappings of melodramatic band bio-pics. The film includes the

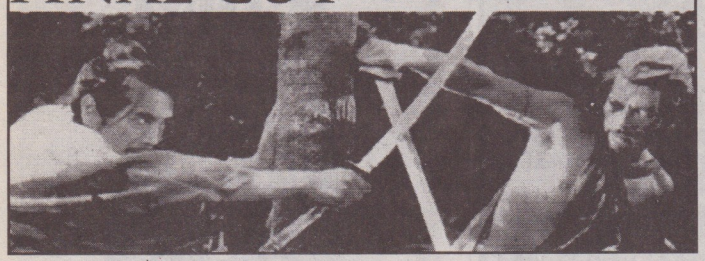
usual suspects, but also gets interviews with Annik Honoré, Ian Curtis' girlfriend and other people from the Manchester scene such as filmmaker Malcolm Whitehead and *City Fun* fanzine co-editor Liz Naylor. **Joy Division** includes lots of rare footage of the band plus the humorous "Things That Aren't There" comparing locales in the story with what has replaced them in recent years.

Honorable mention: New Wave Theatre – I am not including this in my list because none of the episodes have been officially released. After reading the book *In Heaven Everything Is Fine: The Unsolved Life of Peter Ivers and the Lost History of New Wave Theatre* (read it) I became obsessed with Peter Ivers and now own 28 episodes of this fabulous cable television show. Showcasing LA bands in the early '80s with the occasional out of town band, **New Wave Theatre** is a mish-mash of some of the more interesting musical performances ever shown on TV. Plus each episode is bookended with Peter Ivers oddly fascinating monologues. I am throwing it out there in the hope someone will get inspired to release this. It needs to be seen.

While compiling this list I was listening to the reissues of Volcano Suns *Bright Orange Years* and *All Night Lotus Party*. Thank You Merge Records!

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it.
www.carolynkeddy.com

FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI



MILK DOES A BODY GOOD

Ordinarily, I'm adverse to the idea of publicizing any kind of mainstream film. But it's appropriate to make an exception for **Milk**, the latest film by Gus Van Sant, whose early career included **Drugstore Cowboy** and a small cache of cooler-than-normal music pieces. Besides, while multiplexes carried the major winter films on a variety of screens, **Milk** was being shown on only one screen in "liberal" San Francisco, while the likes of **Bolt** and **Transporter 3** got simultaneous release in a half-dozen theaters.

But **Milk** has special associations if you live in the Bay area. Some punks may know that the cover of the DK's first LP, a row of flaming cop cars, was from the infamous "White Riot Night," which occurred after Milk's killer, Dan White, got a mere slap on the wrist on his sentencing for double-murder. (His successful defense was that an excess of Hostess Twinkies reduced his culpability.)

The film opens when Harvey Milk (underplayed by Sean Penn) is forty years old, and every hint of the magical '60s has dried up everywhere. He picks up counterculture type Scott Smith, and their affair turns into a deep relationship—and for Milk, a kind of rebirth. He grew shoulder-length hair, but admits that despite his years, he had nothing to show for his life. So, be decides to become a merchant at the Castro Camera store (now regarded by some as a landmark). He's so energized that he asks to become a member of the Yreka Chamber of Commerce—except he's bluntly told that he will never, ever become member.

The Castro Camera Shop becomes a de-facto center of political action, and Milk realizes that local politics may become the most effective agent of social change. If a local business was found to be friendly to gays, he'd let the word out, and antagonistic businesses wouldn't get any foot-traffic. When cops became abusive to gays, he somehow managed to make them dependent on (or at least answer to) the gay community.

Several attempts at San Francisco Supervisor ended in disappointment. The first chance for Milk came with the debut of district elections, which might finally begin to show the neighborhood diversity of the city. Director Van Sant articulates this change in San Francisco politics as the turning point in Harvey Milk's political career, and perhaps his singular chance to further his ambitions

San Francisco is a main player in the cast of **Milk**, and Van Sant spares no expense at showing off the city. Archival films, some of them the equivalent of home movies, are edited into the narrative to give the feel of reality. This is a particular challenge when it comes to showing the Castro district; thanks to Milk's dedication to urban renewal, the area began a transformation from seedy and quaint to trendy and stylish. The grand Castro theater, unchanged for nearly a century, becomes the visual center for much of the exterior action. (It's also where **Milk** had its gala premiere.)

Milk also takes considerable pains to cast actors who often look astonishingly like the original people. Maybe the only exceptions are Sean Penn and Josh Brolin as Milk and White. Penn's interpretation turns out to be intimate and convincing, though Brolin is less than convincing—surprising after his dead-on imitation of George Bush in Oliver Stone's **W.** But Penn is an exceptionally skilled actor, and has an uncommon ability to draw you into the drama.

California's Proposition 8 came to the ballot box at nearly the same time as **Milk's** release. This was an amendment to the California constitution, a statute that bars gay marriage, which ended up passing at the polls. The film mirrored a similar legal fight that occurred twenty years earlier. Controversial orange juice spokeswoman Anita Bryant gave political support to the Briggs Initiative, which aimed to bar all gays from teaching jobs in public schools; a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Milk took the stage to try to stop the momentum. The election sequence is one of the most exciting in the film.

It's hard to tell how successful **Milk** is in its final goals. No doubt, for many gays, **Milk** will be a singular film experience: one of those rare mainstream films that's scrupulous in showing a politically unpopular era and a lifestyle without apology. **Brokeback Mountain** comes close, but its locale isolates its subject matter from most of America. But Harvey Milk can be linked with the development of the gay voice in American politics, and the events in the film lend it historic weight.

The film itself, however, falls into the "bio-pic" genre, and it's hard to imagine how it could have been avoided. There's little in **Milk** that could have been presented—and maybe more effectively—in a straightforward documentary. It's interesting that when director Van Sant remade Hitchcock's **Psycho**, he showed respect to the original by re-filming using the original screenplay and all of the original camera angles. Milk has some of the same literalism. Comparing to **W.** the biopic of the moment, Stone's storytelling has a more open take on history in order to make its screenplay more compelling.

However, in the long run, the story is worth telling. More then once, I've talked to visitors who hadn't even known the assassinations of George Moscone and Harvey Milk took place.

If you're looking for richer context, you might do well to search for **The Times of Harvey Milk,** a lovingly researched and detailed documentary. It war released over twenty years ago, but contains the faces and stories of the actual participants. Directed by Robert Epstein, the film contains interviews, peppered with an abundance of period footage—most shot when the events were relatively fresh. The film mostly relies on sedate interviews that can, from time to time, have a PBS tone. Despite this, the film won the Academy Award for Best Documentary; at its best, it's more gripping than any feature film.

A number of the storied episodes gain dimension with the documentary approach. It's credible enough to pre-judge White's sentence as outrageously light, but the film suggests that prosecutorial issues may have confused the issue for many. In one of the country's most diverse cities, all of the jurors were white, and straight. The inability (or unwillingness) to deal with the "Twinkie Defense" suggests that the issue may have been more complex than some might want to admit. As both films remark, it was a time when the religious right (Nixon's "Silent Majority") had begun to flex its political muscle. Harvey Milk's ascendancy provided a necessary progressive counterpoint—a tradition that's being preserved to this day.

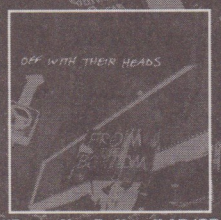
Epsteins's documentary is incredibly revealing. A union leader is caught in a corner when he has to explain to his rank and file that they're "supporting a fruit"—just one small example of the deep prejudice Milk faced, and his challenges facing it. Milk tried to deal with more mundane issues (like a measure to eliminate dog droppings, which is enforced to this day), but his distinction always seemed to revolve around sexual equality.

The candlelight march through San Francisco included nearly 50,000 mourners, and was so touching that the identical footage was used in both movies—a sweeping sequence.

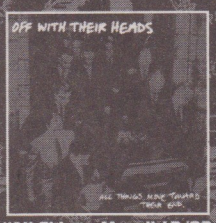
True, **Milk** may be a biopic (albeit a very good one), but **The Times of Harvey Milk** combines the drama of the period with a feeling of verisimilitude that's hard to match.

noideerecords.com

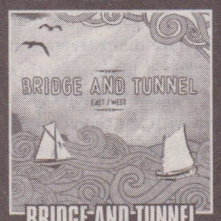
OFF WITH THEIR HEADS



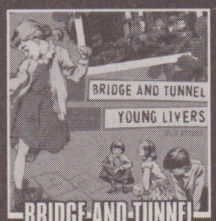
"From the Bottom" LP/CD



"All Things Move" LP/CD

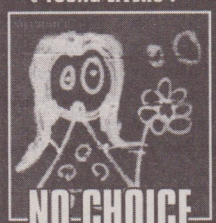


BRIDGE AND TUNNEL
"East / West" LP/CD

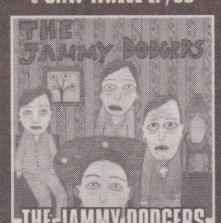


BRIDGE AND TUNNEL
& YOUNG LIVERS 7"

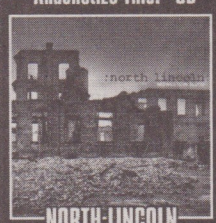
GHOST MICE
& SAW WHEEL LP/CD



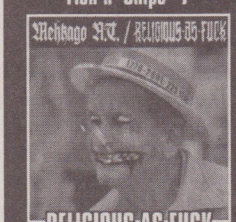
NO CHOICE
"Anashetize This!" CD



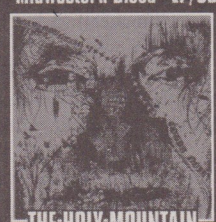
THE JAMMY DODGERS
"Fish n' Chips" 7"



NORTH LINCOLN
"Midwestern Blood" LP/CD



RELIGIOUS AS FUCK
& MEHKAGO N.T. 7"



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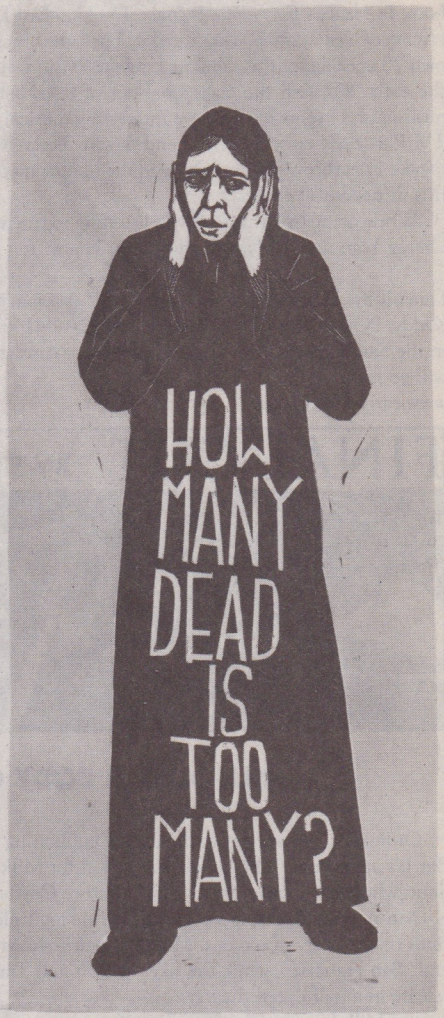

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We believe in the power of personal expression in concert with collective action to transform society.

www.justseeds.org

RECORDS

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(JU) Justin Briggs
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(XV) XYosefX

ACCIDENTAL GUN DEATH – "Skies Are Blue" EP

ACCIDENTAL GUN DEATH immediately gets added to my top ten list, perhaps even my personal favorite of everything I've heard this month! There are like twelve tracks on this thing, and each one rips! Somehow this shit comes off as early-'80s-inspired hardcore—especially with the cool MINOR THREAT guitar assault—without sounding retro at all. Maybe it's the slight early-'90s hardcore influence, like ASSFACTOR 4, that makes ACCIDENTAL GUN DEATH stand out. You should definitely check this out. (BG)
(Blind Spot)

ACROSS THE BORDER – "Loyalty" CD

The "surprise of the month award" goes to this disc by ACROSS THE BORDER. This German sextet falls somewhere between FLOGGING MOLLY and THE CLASH with a smattering of the SWINGIN' UTTERS and BILLY BRAGG in there as well. Rockin' folk-based tunes abound, featuring both electric and acoustic guitars, accordion, violin, and quite a few rousing choruses. Thematically most songs have solid working-class, power-to-the-people, anti-fascist lyrics. Standouts include "Shame on You," "Like a Ray," and a nifty cover of SLIME's "Stortebeker." To top it all off, this CD comes in a terrific package featuring a tri-fold digi-pack and a thick booklet with lots of good photos. Recommended. (RK)
(Twisted Chords)

ADIXION – CD

This is a very weird CD indeed. ADIXION mixes all sorts of music together. At some points psychedelia overtakes them, then a second later they are shredding through a grind part. They sometimes stagger into a more melodic part that will remind you of *Cacophony*-era RUDIMENTARY PENI. I recommend ADIXION only to people who have a very open mind for music. This CD has a very Japanese production, which is flawless, but also in the progressive nature of the band. (WK)
(MCR)

ADOLPH BUTLER / THE ROCCOS – split LP

Oh fucking eat my shit, ROCCOS. You recorded four songs, and all but one of them are GG ALLIN covers, and though they may be competent, are worthless and pointless. You aren't and you never will be the Troubled Troubador. Hell, you aren't fooling anyone—you're not fucked up, you're just from Amsterdam. If "All I Want" isn't a cover, it's gonna be on Volume 5000 of *Killed by Death*. But if it is, fuck you again you useless piece of shit… ADOLPH BUTLER plays competent later FLAG minus the Greg Ginn genius. Lots of *hevvy* riffage, and a ranting reverbed vocalist. Heard it before. They cover VILE and make it interesting, but this type of tea isn't my brand, you know? Their originals have good lyrics—interesting and straying from the subject matter that most of this genre revolves around (being "fucked up" or "crazy"). 22 dollars to ship this to America, so none of you guys are gonna buy it anyways. (BB)
(Motorwolf)

ALLMYBYSELF – "Hold On" EP

First things first, this may EP may not be titled *Hold On*—there's no title on the cover, but it seems like it could be the title judging from the artwork on the back. The packaging is DIY at its best, consisting of screen-printed artwork on a cut-up beer box. This copy came with a nice handwritten note to explain some things going on here, such as what sounds like an un-grounded amplifier on the first song, but is actually the sound of tattoo machines tattooing the song title on two band members' knuckles. The music is not unlike DEFIANCE, OHIO with the acoustic guitars and cello (hell, ALLMYBYSELF even threw in a saw), but conveys an artsier, somewhat darker feeling. I really like the packaging and the super honest approach to things here. Keep an eye out for an ALLMYBYSELF full-length sometime this year. (BD)
(self-released)

ALTERNATE ACTION – "Thin Line" CD

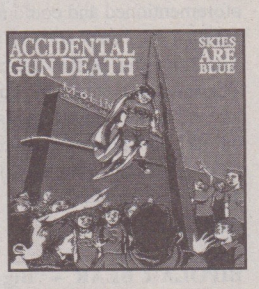
I'm no Oi! head, but I like this Canadian working class punk that is tough, rough, and catchy. ALTERNATE ACTION is a little COCKSPARRER and a little non-sketchy-era SKREWDRIVER. They're no HARD SKIN, but who is? I have a feeling these '80s throwback-styled anthems will perhaps find themselves held as classic by some future punks and skins. (AA)
(Longshot)

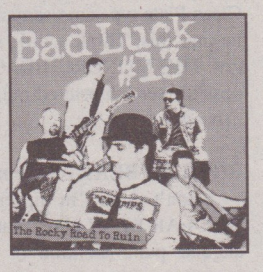
BAD CO. PROJECT – "Sucker Stories" CD

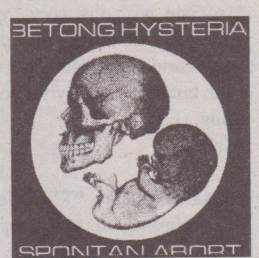
This is a US reissue of an album that originally came out in 2006 on Knock Out Records. BAD CO. PROJECT is a side-project of one of the guys from German Oi!/street punk group OXYMORON, and if you're a fan of that band, I'd say you should check this out. It's not really essential for everyone else though. (AM)
(Joe Pogo)

BAD LUCK #13 – "The Rocky Road to Ruin" EP

I am not generally a fan of posthumous releases, but when they are this good, I am willing to make an exception. Recorded during the later stages of this Canadian band's existence in the '90s, this is the shit. BAD LUCK #13 has a traditional punk







sound, is almost sickeningly catchy, and the songs are about things like drinking and soccer, which means even our friend BR might like it. This isn't the only example, but for me this represents what punk rock is all about. Limited to 300 copies. (KK)
(NIM, $6 ppd)

BETONG HYSTERIA – "Spontan Abort" EP

When I realized that it was my assignment to review this classic, I started stressin'. How could I possibly do this perfect slab of hardcore history any justice? Here goes nothin': BETONG HYSTERIA was from Norway and only released one five-song 7" in 1983. This bootleg compiles the EP plus one compilation track. In 1983, while the rest of Scandanavia was taking cues from DISCHARGE and DISORDER, BETONG HYSTERIA was on a bit of a different trip, yet still retained a nasty hardcore vibe. The songs are more tuneful and catchy than the aforementioned and could almost be lumped in with a *Killed By Death* style of punk, but they just have something that pushes them into a different territory. The infectious and dark guitar leads on this record are one of the things that really make this band stand out. If you have never heard BETONG HYSTERIA before, I couldn't stress enough how much you need this record. Killer. (SE)
(Bootleg)

BIPOLAR BEAR – "Big A Little A / Books on Tape Remixes"

Remixes by BIG A LITTLE A and BOOKS ON TAPE of a mediocre spazzy noise artcore band from Los Angeles. Mysterious/ambiguous cover art that I can't glean anything from. Watch me care. (MM)
(self-released, no info)

BIPOLAR BEAR – "Man Mountain" LP

If you're into NO AGE and you're into FUGAZI (maybe to the exclusion of a lot of the other Ebullition/Clean Plate type emo/screamo stuff), then you might be into this. Think a little more full-sounding, less raw THE MONORCHID. Catchy, well played, and possibly semi-hipstered-out post hardcore. (P$)
(Yosada)

BIPOLAR BEAR – "Mountain Dewd" CD

I don't think I'm hip enough to like this band. BIPOLAR BEAR plays that kind of super-distorted, angular punk-ish kind of music that I generally associate with the very trendy art-school types. I can't get a good feel for this band. Their vocals are so distorted that you can't understand what's being said, but no printed lyrics come with the CD. Not my thing. (FS)
(Yosada)

BLACKENED – "This Means War" CD

According to the press sheet that Think Fast Records sent with this CD, BLACKENED consists of East Coast heavyweights that have been in (or are still with) HATEBREED, THE DISTANCE, and FASTBREAK. That said, BLACKENED stands up to those names, and may be better than what you expect, but not that far off from what you're thinking. Heavy chugs, slick production work, multiple Connecticut Hardcore shout-outs—I have a feeling you already know if you're going to like this. (RM)
(Think Fast)

BLANK STARE – LP

Heavy later BLACK FLAG influence with BLANK STARE, although their sound is pretty general to most modern hardcore. Certain things about this make it stand on its own as a good record. First off, the song structures are unique compared to most other bands in this scene. Second, these guys are great musicians, judging by this record. Third, the songs keep coming with no breaks in between any of the tracks on this 45 rpm 12". Definitely pick this one up. (PL)
(Third Party)

BLEW-UP! – "On Fire" EP

Wow. This is very cool. BLEW-UP! plays slightly slowed down punk rock, very heavy—yes, I realize how stupid that might sound to some of you—with tons of fuzz and a great, sort of '60s-sounding rhythm guitar. Like their Scandinavian friends to the north, it is clear when listening to certain French bands that they have a real appreciation for music that pre-dates the punk scene. This is delivered with a passion and sense of urgency that separates excellent music from good music. Highly recommended. (KK)
(Relax-O-Matic Vibrator)

THE BOTOX RATS / DEAD RINGERS – split EP

These two garagey rock 'n' roll bands fit perfectly together on a split EP. San Francisco's DEAD RINGERS give us two fast and über-snotty rock 'n' roll songs that bring to mind the '77 sound. London's BOTOX RATS are very similar, but take the rock 'n' roll sound a little further with harmonicas and a piano, and the same snotty vocals. (BD)
(Meaty Beaty / No Front Teeth)

THE BRISTLES – "Union Bashing State" CD

Here's an CDEP of presumably new songs from the old Swedish band THE BRISTLES—you may remember from their track, "Don't Give Up," on *Welcome to 1984*. These songs are fast and furious with a lot of energy and solid sound. They remind me a bit of Germany's SLIME, who is of course the reason you got that A.C.A.B. tattoo on your neck. (AA)
(MCR)

BULLDOZER – "The Hammers" CD

Are they referring to the claret and blue? West Ham United??? Who knows…but this *suuuucccks*. I thought it was OK on first listen—kinda Midwestern-sounding street-punk mixed with some Chi-town stuff (a very weak DILLINGER FOUR, maybe). Then I read the lyrics… Wow. The hit "You're a Fag," maybe? "I like your girlfriend's titties / Crying in the poetry / You sound a little gay to me / Butch up you fucking homo / You're a fag." Really? Wow. The track "Panty Sniffer"? OK, I'll spare you, but you get the idea. Moronic shit played by overweight misogynistic homophobic turds. (TB)
(Mother Box)

CARS CAN BE BLUE – "Doubly Unbeatable" CD

Girl/boy duo. Lots of cute songs about love and dating or whatever. A couple moments of super raunchy lyrics sung cutely. Twee pop. Not into it. (MM)
(Happy Happy Birthday To Me)

CALUSA – "Love Is Psychosis" CD

Pop punk reminiscent of MR. T EXPERIENCE and GROOVIE GHOULIES, but a few of the *punk-pop* songs remind me of SUICIDE COMMANDOS—incidentally, CALUSA is from Minneapolis. Production is clear, guitars have a cool tone…all in all, analysis says not amazing, but not bad. Favorite songs were "Cummer" and "Dick Cheney, You're Fucking Up the World." After sixteen songs I was bored with it; had it been a 7" I might have been raving. If any of the above bands interest you, I suggest checking it out. (VL)
(self-released, $7 ppd)

CHINESE TELEPHONES – "Game of Pricks / I Don't Wanna Get Involved"

CHINESE TELEPHONES rule, and Art of the Underground rules, but this record does not rule. You never know what to expect from the Art of the Underground single series. They always find amazing bands to release, but more often then not the two songs they pick sound like throwaways. I've said this before, and by now the guys at this label must hate my guts. Some of their singles totally rule, like the CLOSET FAIRIES and DELAY singles. But take this record, for example: side A is a 60-second song that kind of reminds me of DINOSAUR JR, then side B is a cover of the QUEERS song "I Don't Wanna Get Involved," and it sounds just like how the QUEERS played it. This record totally leaves you feeling unfulfilled. Do your self a favor and pick up the CHINESE TELEPHONES / POTENTIAL JOHNS split LP. That is some CHINESE TELEPHONES that will make your dang brain explode. This single is more for collectors only, and since it's limited to only 350, it's probably already sold out and collectors are the only ones that will get to listen to it. (FS)
(Art of the Underground)

CITY OF SHIPS – "Live Free or Don't Tour" LP

It's not indie (c)rock necessarily, but definitely a mixed bag of "post-whatever" as the insert says. Very rock riff-ic, like late-era CAVE IN, but without the space rockets, and not quite as good. CITY OF SHIPS has a heavy aspect, but not one of intensity, just a good low-end with winding guitars and sung vocals that are fitting and done well. PELICAN certainly springs to mind on the second listen. Not as out-there as some of the ISIS albums, but CITY OF SHIPS does carry that feeling of flying through the ether on the wings of some metal goddess' pet unicorn while the mushrooms wear off. I picture myself lying in my bed with the earphones on, but probably not. (RM)
(Forcefield)

THE CLOSET FAIRIES / PARTY GARBAGE – split EP

THE CLOSET FAIRIES start out this split with that dirty, lo-fi, beer-soaked basement pop punk sound. It's too bad they didn't include lyrics as it's kinda hard to hear what they're singing about at times. PARTY GARBAGE from Austin bangs out the same style of music, taking influences from the likes of HÜSKER DÜ on the faster song, while the slower one has a more JAWBREAKER sound to it. Oh, if you're a fan of *Snakepit* zine, you'll want to check this out as Ben plays drums, wrote the music for one of the songs, and did the cover art. (BD)
(Kiss of Death)

COLD STARE – "Last Time" EP

These guys from Chula Vista, CA got the whole skinhead Boston-style hardcore going on. The singer has those cookie monster vocals that remind me of 86 MENTALITY, but the recording is a little too polished. I feel that if you're trying to channel LAST RIGHTS, you've gotta get down and dirty with the production. Besides that, this record is pretty great. (PL)
(Mind Disease)

CONTROL DE ESTADO – "Ladron" EP

Brandon, Florida's CONTROL DE ESTADO's second EP blasts six tracks of slightly twisted, straightforward thrash. Single-line bursts of spirited hardcore with shredded vocals, a la later CRUDOS, spitting point-blank political lyrics largely in Spanish. Quirky, odd twists, an occasional SST-styled guitar wail, or just bizarre breaks mix this up from any sort of formulaic thrash. Nicely packaged in a '90s styled screened, recycled paper fold-out sleeve. Cool! (KS)
(IFB)

DCOI – "Sleepless" EP

Somehow DCOI managed to fit ten songs on this EP without resorting to powerviolence or grind. This is actually really fucking aggressive, mid-to-fast pace hardcore with a ton of rad changes and influences that are not likely for the style of music that they play. I like the recording, first off, because it is totally piercing and lacks overproduction. Secondly, the music is played like it was a live show with lots of grit and guts. This doesn't sound like they sat in chairs in the studio to record. The vocals are the kind of larynx-shredding cries that are a perfect companion to the lyrical content of despair and rage. DCOI reminds me of great '90s bands like BORN AGAINST and DOWNFALL (Holland). They mix really great punk with a lot of breakdowns and fast hardcore parts that make the music interesting to listen to while still keeping the flow of rock 'n' roll and not meandering into emocore crap. This is a really good record that you would be wise to track down. (WK)
(True)

DEATH – "...For The Whole World To See" CD

OK, picture this: 1973, Detroit, three brothers (I mean related...not...oh, you know what I mean) that had previously been jamming old Motown and funk check out THE STOOGES. Minds are blown and the boys change tack and start mining the same vein. They call their band DEATH...and they were black kids from the wrong side of town. You thought that the BAD BRAINS were the first all-black punk band? Nope. These cats had years on 'em. They recorded a whole album, but only released a 7", which of course is collector grail. This CD is the whole unreleased LP, which includes the 7". The 45 is the jam, especially the flipside "Keep on Knocking," which has a real funk flavor with the MC5 protopunk. Historically this is a real gem—I mean, Detroit 1975?? Wow. But the jams back it up... sure the LP doesn't hold up quite as well to the single bangers, but its still a great listen. Historical gold... from Drag City of all people. (TB)
(Drag City)

DEATHTRIBE / KRIEGSHÖG – split EP

Bottom line here folks, you absolutely can't go wrong when the current best band on Earth teams up with a band that's only one-half step behind for a split 7". If that didn't sell you... KRIEGSHÖG is perfect in my book—the new gods of noisy Japanese D-beat hardcore. I've listened to this record and their two other releases countless times in the last couple months, and I can't consider even one second of that time wasted. On the flip, Tokyo's DEATHTRIBE are equally competent in the same game as KRIEGSHÖG, though they take a slightly different approach. The vocals on the first and third tracks are from the FRAMTID school of gutteral, while the second track, "In My Nightmare," takes a more UK82-style approach to mix things up, much in the same way other Japanese noise-crusters like SDS and DEFECTOR do. I think I liked the stuff on DEATHTRIBE's demo a tad more than these tracks, but to say I liked that demo *a lot* would be a great understatement 'cause this shit is a nard-killer too. Each band also takes a stab at one of each other's songs. I'd say this is in the top five split records of all time, so better get your hunt on. (JU)
(In Crust We Thrash)

DELAY / MONIKERS – split EP

What's the deal with pop punk labels making *sooooo* many dang splits 7"s? Shit is getting out of control! More often than not, you'll find two bands sharing a 7" that don't really go together for any reason aside from some kind of cross-marketing bullshit. But then you'll also find records like this, where the two bands go together great and both sides are totally rad! DELAY is a super posi pop punk band from Ohio fronted by twin brothers. These dudes rule—they are like a Bloomington / Plan-it-X version of PINHEAD GUNPOWDER. While everyone else at the show is drunk and puking on themselves, these guys are slamming Mountain Dew, doing three-way high fives, and partying way harder than all the wasteoids. It's true. I've seen this happen. The lyrics are real interesting (aside from the love song, whatever), good social commentary. MONIKERS side is also pretty awesome. These songs are on the same level as their full-length, which kicked ass. MONIKERS are total JAWBREAKER worship, for sure. And to be fair, their side is all about the first song. It's a pogo-anthem all the way. The second song is good, but it's a bit too tame and the vocals are kind of buried. I dig! (FS)
(Kiss of Death)

DESOLATEVOID – "No Sign of Better Times" CD

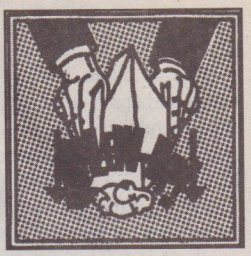
Honestly, the singer of DESOLATEVOID sounds way, *waaaaay* too much like Mr. Philip Anselmo. Some of the riffs are OK in an EYEHATEGOD-ish way, and some of the guitar leads are pretty tasty, but goddamn, those PANTERA vocals just put me off really bad. Especially once he starts in with the spoken-word parts. I have all the respect in the world for Nick and Crimes Against Humanity, but this is really not very good at all. (AU)
(Crimes Against Humanity)

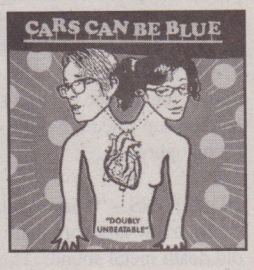
DINOSAUR AND THE MISSING LINK – "After the Fashion" EP

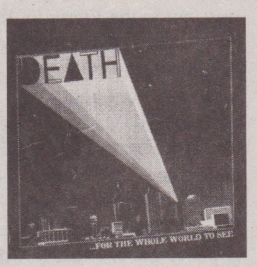
A solid entry into the guitar/drum sweepstakes with better-than-average songs, a sense of humor, and just-crummy-enough-for-garage production. Not transcendent, but 'salright by me. (DD)
(Milk 'n' Herpes)

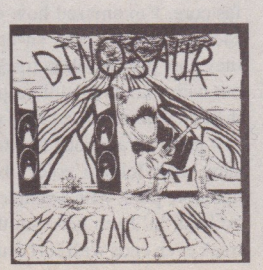
DISCARGA – "Musica Pra Guerra" CD

Next level from their previous releases. This three-piece follows the trend of impeccably recorded and delivered hardcore from Brazil with probably their best produced material yet, but featuring about half as many tracks than their previous full-length self-titled LP. It's no less wailingly frantic however, with their *Marinus*-era SEEIN' RED-styled drum-driven throttling thrash blizzard seamlessly presented in longer, interconnected compositions as opposed to 30-second blasting snippets. DISCARGA is then able to flex their formula with mid-tempo melodic sing-along tracks, moody intros, unpredictable bridges, and musical complexity. This gives the recording an over-the-top hook that's always been just out of reach of the band's strong previous releases. Lyrics entirely in Portuguese. There's a rough "sou/jazz/funk performers we like" *Wax Poetics*-ish reggae shout-out I could take a pass on towards the end, but otherwise I'm riveted! Killer!! (KS)
(Laja / 625 Thrash)









DISCO ASSAULT – "Saturday Night Bleeder" EP

This is more like a hardcore punk assault, which perhaps is disco music for punks, skins, and other derelicts. This five-song EP outta Canada blazes some fast and furious shit along the lines of PINK LINCOLNS mixed with NINE SHOCKS TERROR, if they had John Brannon on vocals. I dig the mixture of topics in the lyrics, ranging from a searing condemnation of American "freedom," to being angry with work and personal fate, and to just plain hating some fucking people. Yes, it's good! And there's a fun ROACH MOTEL cover thrown in as well. The cover of this thing, by the way, is a hilarious drawing of skeleton punks and skins destroying a disco bar and spray-painting some poor balding sap's head! Need I say more? (BG)
(Schizophrenic)

DIVISIONS – "Vomit Hounds" EP

Buzzsaw hardcore that includes some crusty and old death metal sounds. Honestly, my thought while listening to this the first time was "sick." DIVISIONS plays pissed-off, shredding hardcore, but with metal influences from bands like DISMEMBER or FLESHCRAWL. (MH)
(Human Crush, $5 ppd)

DRUID PERFUME – LP

I'm sure DRUID PERFUME sounds like some other weird punk band, but to me the drums and bass could have been culled from late-period BLACK FLAG due to their thuddy jazziness. The singer sounds like that one BLACK FLAG song where he goes "I'm Not a Machine," but not stupid. There are horns featured fairly prominently, in the *Funhouse* way, not in the *Eternally Yours* way, and sometimes space noises. It's usually cohesive, but occasionally disjointed, sort of like how I want no wave to sound instead of boring, tight-ass drivel as most of it turns out to be. HUMAN EYE gone jazz. The first song on the B-side is a complete hit with farty horns, right-on singing, and big bad punch drums. This is the farthest I've ever gotten with a record I've had to review. This is great. This is great. This is great. This is pretty good. I like it. I'd buy this. Maybe I will. (BB)
(Pigs / 1202)

DUMBS – "Rocket From Poland" CD

A RAMONES tribute/parody band from Poland. Vocals in Polish. Pretty rocking, but so were the RAMONES. Maybe for RAMONES fanatics, but pretty unnecessary to me as far as studio releases go. (RL)
(Pasazer)

ELEUTHEROS / LEPER – split EP

LEPER rips through two fast hardcore tracks that have elements of powerviolence, grindcore, and fastcore. I'm amazed how many words they fit into each song. The lyric sheet is packed even though they play just two short tracks. ELEUTHEROS starts out with standard medium-paced hardcore punk, and then they threw me a curve with a very poppy chorus that has a garage rock feel featuring multiple cleanly sung male/female voices before kicking back into hardcore punk with screamed vocals. I like how they go back 'n' forth between the sounds. Hell, the first track even ends with surf drums, clean reverby guitar, and a guy chanting "DIY or die." This is catchy and earnest. Their second track, "DIY Nation," sounds almost exactly like the first track "DIY or Die." This time there is a ska breakdown with spoken female vocals. I was surprised the ska didn't bother me. This 7" is ruling my world right now. (MH)
(True)

ENDLESS BLOCKADE / SHANK – split EP

Über-limited single with both bands performing cover songs. ENDLESS BLOCKADE handles JUDGE's "Fed Up," recorded in 2004, and SHANK's side is CITIZENS ARREST's "Number," recorded in 2003. The ENDLESS BLOCKADE side is OK. The SHANK side is better, though ENDLESS BLOCKADE's performance has more originality than SHANK's. Limited to 300, 100 of which had a special cover. Good luck on finding it. (VL)
(Schizophrenic)

ENSLAVE / REALIZED – split LP

A split LP from two Japanese bands that I know absolutely nothing about. ENSLAVE rocks a nice mix of faster, emo-styled hardcore like FINGER PRINT and cream it together nicely with something similar to the more "epic" Japanese bands of recent years like ASSAULT. Two vocalists—one more high-pitched and scream-y and one more "hardcore" sounding. Plenty of melodic and wandering guitar bits to go around, and some other moments that are definitely more from the emo school of things, but there is also that fist-pumping energy that our friends to the east always bring to the table. I'm a fan. On the other side of this 12" piece of wax we have Sapporo's REALIZED, and they fucking *bring it*! I have to say, though, the few moments where they try to experiment with some slower odd or metallic elements, they start to lose me. What REALIZED does best, and what they do most often, is good mid-paced, ripping hardcore. Unlike ENSLAVE, REALIZED's epic-ness and melody are more subtle, but definitely a strong element to their sound. Me like. A lot. (JU)
(self-released)

EPIDEMICS – "Waking Up the Dead" LP

Maybe it's just the female vocals, but this instantly reminds me of some old SIOUXSIE SIOUX or BLONDIE… Being from Sweden, THE EPIDEMICS also remind me a little bit of a punkier version of THE SOUNDS due to the vocals. Overall, I really like the crisp guitars and the drums, which are played in a quick, choppy fashion that's really catchy in its minimal simplicity. My only complaint is that some of the lyrics are kind of corny, "The pigs will have me for dessert if I don't stay alert," and "It's my idea of having fun dancing in the graveyard tonight / I'll be the one waking up the dead tonight." I know that's petty of me, and I'm sure that I would sound just as goofy if I tried to sing in Swedish!! (ML)
(Ny Vag / Thrashbastard)

EYE FOR AN EYE – "Cisza" CD

New long-player from possibly the longest standing Polish punk band. Pretty ferocious femme-fronted gear, falling somewhere between ANTISCHISM, POST REGIMENT, and UK82. Anna's vocals are rad—throat-tearing yet tuneful. Digging it. I admit I struggle with a whole CD of a band where I can't understand a lick…. But if you are into hardcore from abroad you can't go wrong with these cats. (TB)
(Pasazer)

THE FEMURS – "Ride Together" CD

Poppy indie rock with acoustic stylings. A one-man band. Maybe a candidate for the soundtrack for a *Juno* sequel, but not me. (RL)
(Nuthouse)

FILTHY ROTTEN SEX MACHINE – "Something To Die For" CD

I know that absolutely nothing is completely original anymore, so it's hard to start a unique sounding band, but man… I've heard this *way* too many times before! This band isn't terrible, but I think that FILTHY ROTTEN SEX MACHINE would be better "seen and not heard," if you know what I mean. Basically they would provide an awesome background to a really fun, drunken night at the bar. I'm sure that they put on a great live show and would be a lot of fun if you were completely wasted, but I'd stick to my old WEAKLINGS and MURDER CITY DEVILS records to listen to at home if I want to hear some trashy rock 'n' roll… (ML)
(self-released)

FINAL EXIT – "Seasons Are Going and Going… and Lives Goes On" 3" CD

Totally weird and awesome, Japan's FINAL EXIT plays a time-tested blend of noisy, grinding anti-music and spastic rock 'n' roll, with the odd two- or three-second metal solo or surf part for good measure. This 3" CD features twelve songs, mostly under a minute, including covers of IRON MAIDEN ("Aces High") and COMPLEX ("Be My Baby"). The whole thing clocks in at under eleven minutes, and I had a raging headache by the time I was done listening. If you like THE LOCUST, MELT BANANA, or FRAMTID, you should check this out. (VX)
(Rage For All)

FIX MY HEAD – "Empty Slogans" EP

Finally, FIX MY HEAD gets a recording that does them justice. This is abrasive hardcore from the Bay Area. Tight and furious playing with over-the-top energy makes for a solid release. If you are looking for speed and power in your music give FIX MY HEAD a spin. (MS)
(No Options)

FLIPOUT A.A. – "Flipout Song" CD

Fast, thrashed-out Japanese punk from ex-members of LIE. High-octave, non-musical vocals, pounding drums, and guitar solos. Fortunately for me, it's all over in a few minutes. Ten songs in eleven minutes. That's the way to do it. (CK)
(625 Thrash)

FLIPPER – "Album – Generic Flipper" CD

I used to listen to a tape of this record over and over again on my bike. I'd ride and ride, thinking how much I hated all the cars and buses and people; it was the perfect soundtrack to my contempt of mankind, my burning sadness. Once I was singing along to "Life," and a shitty rusted-out car full of weirdos started shouting along. They paced slowly along with me, holding up traffic, singing with me,

smiling...punks, strangers, brought together by our contempt, reveling in our outsider-ness together. In that moment I knew I'd always be punk. This, San Francisco's legendary mutant-punk-noise band FLIPPER's debut 1982 record, is one of those arguably perfect records—equal parts nostalgia and true genius. They were groundbreaking in their slow, heavy, and noisy approach to punk. Their disregard for all rules of music and rhythm, their subversion of what punk was thought to be makes them a band that is unduplicable—an absolute anomaly. Lyrically it's simple and repetitive, but the words cut right to the heart of things. Both "Life" and "Ever" will always stand out to me that way. Now, it's clear that FLIPPER influenced countless bands over the years, but for all that inspiration they still sound fresh and vital. I fucking love this record. (AA)
(Water)

FLIPPER – "Gone Fishin'" CD

San Francisco's bad boys of sludgy art rock put out their second LP in 1984. It's funky, jazzy, and obtuse, but I don't really know if it would strike much of a chord with punks these days. I never really "got" the band, but I find myself enjoying *Gone Fishin'* thoroughly. Maybe I've finally come around. This CD version features liner notes from King Buzzo on why FLIPPER were so important. It's actually nice to see these records finally get decent reissues. I'm going to hold out for the vinyl version, so that I can cut out and build the cardboard model of the Flippermobile. (AM)
(Water)

FLIPPER – "Public Flipper Limited, Live 1980-1985" CD

FLIPPER's studio records are great. There's no question about it. But to truly be a Flipper fan you have to really enjoy listening to them perform live. They don't make it easy either. Abrasive, obnoxious, but oh so fun. They whine for beer, insult the audience, play extremely extended versions of their songs, and do whatever they damn well please. "We'll play 'Sex Bomb' if you can get them to give us beers," they plead with their CBGB audience and the crowd gets them what they want. A two-disc, 86-minute collection of live recordings from San Francisco, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Washington DC, New York, and Toronto. Can you handle it? I can. This is FLIPPER at their finest. Enjoy. (CK)
(Water)

FLIPPER – "Sex Bomb Baby!" CD

Supposedly all these FLIPPER reissues are coming out on vinyl on the Four Men With Beards label, which somehow seems totally bogus—how can FLIPPER be reissued on a label with such a name?! Four Men with *fucking* Beards! What?! The FLIPPER sound is non-comparable or containable—it's heavy and exact, yet all over the place and mocking. This disc contains all the early pre-*Generic* 7"s and compilation tracks, and is essential. Falconi's guitar sound is so perfect, a gruesome hex on your ears, plus the Shatter/sometimes Loose/always DePace propulsive rhythm section that'll make you loose your lunch, losers. Bruce Loose's vocals and lyrics are totally genius. I would, in a Roehrs style, quote the entirety of "Sacrifice" or "Earthworm" as evidence, but you should get this so you can witness it with your own senses. You probably are already intoning the words to yourself. (LG)
(Water)

THE FRACTIONS / REVENGE OF THE PSYCHOTRONIC MAN – split CD

Manchester, England's REVENGE OF THE PSYCHOTRONIC MAN offers us some melodic hardcore very similar to the late KID DYNAMITE, while sounding a lot less like GORILLA BISCUITS than KID DYNAMITE did. They went with the less produced sound, which I really can't recommend enough. It seems like more bands these days do the opposite and end up with a crystal-clear production that I think takes away from the music's appeal. THE FRACTION plays ska-infused melodic hardcore made popular by the likes of AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY and CHOKING VICTIM. While they aren't really that bad, I think they'd be much better off dropping the ska and keeping with the hardcore. (BD)
(TNS)

FUCK KNIGHTS – "Kristina" EP

Well, this band isn't getting any props from me for their name, but I'll give it a thumbs up for the music! This is super lo-fi garage/punk rock 'n' roll along the lines of the BLACK LIPS—fuzzed-out guitars abound with frantic leads throughout. The drummer hammers away on a stripped-down kit while handling the vocals as well. It doesn't get much simpler than this, but boy does it work! Other than the band name and ridiculous monikers of the members (Sir Fuxalot, Sir Getsalottapuss, and Lord Ballahag), I fully endorse this EP!! (ML)
(Big Action)

GENETIC ANGRY – "Thoughts / Change"

GENETIC ANGRY embodies the term what you see is what you get. These sloppy, dumb punk rockers out of Nova Scotia play a brand of punk that's equally messy as it is retarded. Sounds like BLACK FLAG mixed with the MEAT PUPPETS. If you thought grunge was dead and gone, this record will make you think again. (PL)
(Sewercide)

GET BENT / JEAN CLAUDE JAM BAND – split EP

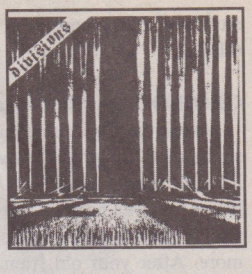
The bass-line in the GET BENT song could chew up steel. This is some kick-ass melodic punk, equal parts North Florida and North Carolina. What a great little tune…serious energy and hooks. I'm hungry for more—one song won't do it. I want to dance with gay abandon. After some serious deliberation, I've come to the conclusion that JEAN CLAUDE JAM BAND is a bad band name…and not so-bad-that-it's-good, no. Their music is OK—slightly emo, low-tempo melodic alt-country-meets-college-radio-meets punk. This EP is still worth it because of the GET BENT side…which I'm about to play again right now… (AD)
(Kiss of Death)

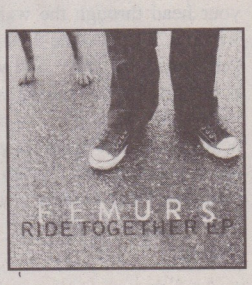
THE GOTHIEFS – "Hongkong Rocks / Limited Appeal"

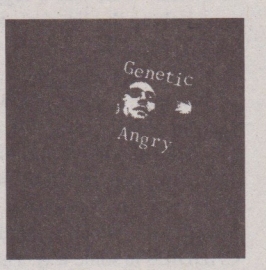
The latest band from Nils Damage, formerly of my faves SUPERHELICOPTER. This is the kind of musical greatness only members of that band can consistently achieve, no matter how hard the rest of the world tries. It's everything I could hope for: messy, distorted, trashy garage punk that still manages to be very catchy. Extremely short songs that only make me wish there were more than two. No time for messing around. The two-piece line up also features Henner Destruction of THE 244GL. It doesn't sound like your average two-piece. Absolutely fantastic. (CK)
(High School Refuse)

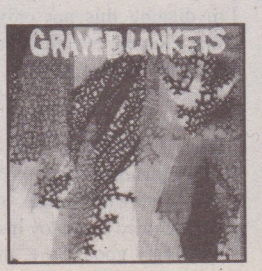
GRAVEBLANKETS – "Our Love Is Real" EP

I hate to be a jerk because this isn't that bad, but at the same time this record is absolutely forgettable. When I'm record shopping I often buy singles from bands I've never heard of because they look like they might be good. In most cases I'm proven wrong. This is exactly the type of single you will run across in a few years in the used pile (assuming there are still record stores in a few years), and you will pause and look at it and think to yourself, "This could be good." Then, once at home you will learn why you had never heard of the band and why it was priced at 99 cents. That being said, GRAVEBLANKETS aren't terrible, and if you only own three records, and this happens to be one of them, and you are forced to play it everyday of your life, it could kinda grow on you. It's just generic, distorted rock









stuff with a little hook here and there. (MU)
(HoZac)

GROINOIDS – "Radiobeat Sessions" EP

Awesome. Three unreleased tracks from the same session that brought us "Angel" on *This Is Boston Not LA* and "Empty Skull" on *Unsafe at Any Speed*. And if you've ever heard either of the two, most likely you've been foaming at the mouth, like me, to hear more. After your old friends "Angel" and "Empty Skull," you hear "Burn," and are compelled to smash your head through the wall, your fists through the window, foot into the dresser. Now flip it over, you get "Doy, Doy, Doy," and your downstairs neighbor is banging on the ceiling with a broom. Turn it up 'cause the slow jam, "4.6 Billion Vampires," up next'll have you dragging your knuckles, pacing the room, catching your breath. Yeah, get into this one, take deep loud breaths, get angry, now flip it back over and *destroy*! (RR)
(Fatalist)

GUILTY FACES – "Nightmares" EP

What happens when you mix overdriven tuneful guitar melodies (think a cleaner WIPERS) and snotty, teenage angsty punk vocals (think ANGRY SAMOANS)? Well, if you add some mid-tempo catchiness and a touch of classic sensibilities, you get GUILTY FACES. Pretty rad. (AA)
(Room 101)

HARIJAN / JOHN PLAYER SPECIALS – split CD

Three songs from each of these modern ska bands out of, I believe, the UK. This split CD starts off with HARIJAN who has a reggae-influenced ska punk sound along the lines of early BOSSTONES meets NOFX's reggae numbers. Their best song of the three was "Portland Street," which was the hardest of the disc, almost throwing in a METALLICA element. JOHN PLAYER SPECIALS has more of a vaudevillian-ska-type sound, utilizing ukelele and some pop progressions. My favorite track of theirs was the personally introspective "Weak in Your Eyes," which reminds me a bit of the MAD CADDIES in some way. Though HARIJAN seems to be a bit tighter musically, I prefer the more traditional ska feel of the JOHN PLAYER SPECIALS. Decent little EP here. (RK)
(TNS)

THE HATEPINKS – "Oupupo Songs: Hate!" EP

An EP-LP is more apt description, considering it has 16 songs. Should be interesting. A thirty-second time limit on each tune would usually spell disaster, but each song rolls so smoothly into one another it's almost like listening to the THE WHO's "A Quick One." Onto the music, which is a great mix of post-punk bleakness, '79 skinny-tie new wave, the new garage sounds of Memphis, and good old '77 punk. I'm digging this not only 'cause they are smart enough to pull this off, but also because the tunes are hitting the heights. (SD)
(Squoodge)

LES HATEPINKS – "Oupupo Songs II: Kindergarten Revolution" EP

According to the back of the record, all the songs were recorded using toy instruments. The results are surprisingly good. Sure, the band kinda looks like the French version of the BRIEFS, but the four songs on this 7" (including a cover of VOM's "Electrocute Your Cock") hold up well. Fun, funny even, but not killer. Need a description? How 'bout "hitting the melodic side of garage punk"? Packaged in a glossy-cover Hatepinks-focused fanzine. (IS)
(Squoodge / Drunknroll)

HELLHOLE – "Detained" EP

This is HELLHOLE's first EP from 2007. Apparently, they have a sophomore effort titled *Uppers/Downers* that was released in 2008. This New Jersey outfit has taken a nod from its neighbors to the east, and does it's best to conjure up the same spiteful spirit of late-'80s NYHC . Most of the tunes are one big stompy mosh part that lacks the hooks to make this interesting. The fast parts aren't doing it for me either. Maybe the second EP is better. (SE)
(Off the Books, no info)

HEY GIRL – "Alarm" EP

OK, so this isn't the HEY GIRL from the Bay Area. At first I was hesitant because I love that HEY GIRL, and for some reason I was fully expecting some weird rap duo or something. I don't even think it's a band name; it's just the title of the comic that this seven-inch is apparently the soundtrack for. I'm kind of way into the idea of projects as opposed to bands lately. Anyways, it's totally genius because it's this weird little comic, and then an entire theme album about being hit on by gross/annoying dudes everywhere, including dialogue! Starting out on the bus to work, then at the record store job, then at the bar after work. It's kind of amazing because it captures a range of different types of gross dudes and girl reactions to it. The actual music is all right—it's kind of '90s punk in that SLEATER-KINNEY way, which I'm not fully into, and by the end it gets quieter and folkier, which is a bummer. But I'm still way in love with the idea. (MM)
(self-released, no info)

HIGH JINKS – "Cutlass Is Dead" EP

I was warned when I got this to review that I would like it, which I hate because you never know what the fuck your really gunna feel about stuff till you hear. Initially, I was into the sound but a bit disappointed when I wasn't freaking out over the songs. These Canadian youngsters put out a solid effort on the always luv'ly XTrueX Records from Edmonton, Alberta. We're not breaking any new ground here but these dudes keep a good pace and have great mid-tempo breakdowns. HIGH JINKS is nothing to write home about. Their lyrics pertain mostly to various forms of submission and misunderstanding, yet do earn extra points for song titles like "Heaven's All Hype" and "Schindler's Fist." (RM)
(True)

LES HORMONES – "Peggy" EP

File next to any other garage rock revival band you can think of. Two songs on side A, the second song has a different version of it on the B-side. One version in English, one in French. (MM)
(Heads-Up)

HOSTAGE LIFE / KNUCKLEHEAD – split EP

KNUCKLEHEAD (from Calgary, Alberta) plays some of the best street punk I've heard in years. Right from the bell, they come out swinging with CLASH-style harmonious guitars, good group backing vocals and catchy choruses, and an unbridled energy and freshness that I haven't really heard in this sub-genre (not that I've been really looking…) in some time. They have smart lyrics as well, which is usually the breaking point with this stuff, so they're already superior to their most obvious comparison, the DROPKICK MURPHYS. In fact, this reminds me of when the MURPHYS were young and good. Brilliant. Enough to make me start paying attention to street-punk again after about a half-decade hiatus. Good old Canada. If KNUCKLEHEAD sounds like the DROPKICK MURPHYS, then you could say that HOSTAGE LIFE (from Toronto) is like the US BOMBS. That was my first thought anyway, but once things on their side really got going I'd have to say they have more going on, and they have just as much in common with, say, THE EXPLOSION—slightly glammy but still rockin'. Then the second song came on and it's total BIG AUDIO DYNAMITE—I swear I thought it was a guest appearance by Mick Jones on vocals for a second… Another band with well thought-out, intelligent lyrics. This EP was a real surprise; if I did a year-end top ten this would be on it and it's only January. The only other thing I have to say is fuck the Flames and fuck the Leafs, the cup's coming to San Jose this year. Very, very good. (AD)
(Longshot)

HOTPANTS ROMANCE – "It's a Heatwave" CD

RAINCOATS-style jangle, sped up and chaos-ed out. Three British girls that sound like they picked up their instruments two minutes ago and just wanna fuck shit up. All the songs have about two lines of simple, rhyme-y lyrics that are screamed and screeched over and over again by all three of them. I feel like the main purpose of this band is pure fuck-shit-uppery. They have quieter moments that are sweet, but kind of dirty. It's good times, but an entire album is a little much. (MM)
(Happy Happy Birthday To Me)

THE HUNCHES – "Exit Dreams" LP

I've anxiously been awaiting this record for a whole year now. Hart, the singer, was my co-worker and refused to let me hear the recording during the process. He can be a dick. The day this arrived at my work I listened to it five times in a row and about forty times since, give or take, and I'm sick of it. It's fantastic and I'll listen to it repeatedly in a week or so. When I found out I was to review this I was horror-stricken as I find giving them an equitable and fair review a daunting task. I wish not to compare THE HUNCHES sound or songs to their influences or contemporaries as I feel they are of equal or greater importance at this point. For real, how many bands can put out three great full-lengths? *Exit Dreams* is the final Hunches record, and I want all my friends to be devouring this as I have been the last two weeks. Hesitantly, I'll cheapen this review by telling you what a former *MRR* coordinator told me, "It's as if CONFUSE did a ROLLING STONES cover record." I agree, yet find THE HUNCHES to be more complex than that. This record just has so many layers to it, you could take the entire history of rock/punk, put it into a blender, and this is the outcome—a beautiful, original final thrust. R.I.P. Hunches. (RR)
(In The Red)

LOS IMPALA – "Estos Son" 10"

Another welcome 10" reissue of a 12" from Electro Harmonix (although two tracks were cut for this version)—this is generally regarded as Los Impala's best work. Prior to this album, they tended to be rather tame (like fellow Venezueleanos LOS 007). With this 1967 release, they started to add elements of psych and soul with pretty good results, marking the midway point between their original pop sound and the heavier Impala Syndrome project (not my cup of tea, but it's got its fans). Highlight for me is their version of JOE TEX's "Show Me," featuring fuzz bass and a sparingly used horn section. (DD)
(Electro Harmonix, www.munster-records.com)

IMPULSE INTERNATIONAL – "Hollywood Underground / Gotta Run Home"

If you're looking for two fantastic, catchy '78 mod punk-influenced tunes to sustain your power-pop habit, then this is your fix! I like this so much that I'm now inspired to track down their other two singles that I've missed out on for some godforsaken reason. I would say this should fit nicely between your TRANZMITORS and GENTLEMAN JESSE records, both of which are estimable company. I hope an LP is next! (BG)
(Killer)

I NEED CLOSURE – "Uneasy Listening" CD

Well-produced and well played heavy modern hardcore from people who have obviously been around for a while in various bands. I actually like this, and if I NEED CLOSURE comes through, I'll definitely come check them out live. The lyrics stay well within the currently accepted personal themes (depression, hatred, hopelessness) without being cheesy. The music reminds me of the first BLACKLISTED full-length, while the vocals sound like early BLOOD FOR BLOOD, which is nothing but a good thing in my book. CEREMONY, TRASH TALK, and maybe COLISEUM would be good reference points as well. Recommended. (VX)
(Red Witch, no info)

INTENSIVES / PANIK ATTAK – split EP

THE INTENSIVES start things of with some street fucking punk, Vocals remind me of SLOPPY SECONDS and the songs are similarly straightforward with some little guitar flourishes. PANIK ATTAK is also set squarely in the street punk tradition, but has a little more trashed-out sound with some cool vocal effects going on. My person favorite lyrics are "Bugger wank this police state"…I really hope that's some totally poseur action on that UK slang, it's better that way. Funnier? Funner? Either way works for me. (AA)
(Longshot)

JAIL – "Pardono / Always Wrong"

Now this is something to get excited about—a record that defies genres and begs to be flipped repeatedly. It has a driving indie rock feel, but such a biting edge that it is undeniably punk. Kinda WIPERS, but happier; kinda WEDDING PRESENT, but punker… I dunno who to compare it to, but I love it. Which side is better? Dunno, flip a coin—they are both magic. I am waving my fist at the screen for not getting a reviewer's copy. (TB)
(Decorated)

JOHNS TOWN ALOHA – "Bloody Ravens Wander" EP

Oh hell yes! JOHNS TOWN ALOHA is back with a second EP of face-peeling, wall-of-noise hardcore! The Japanese band features members of thrashers EXCLAIM and BREAKFAST, but the sound is a departure from what those bands achieved. Beneath the rubble lies the basic structure of the members' previous bands, yet on the surface is a screech and howl so vicious that I can't decipher if there is a sample of bombs detonating or if it just the music. The guitars are soloing over almost the entire record in a frantic way that just adds to the chaos. Every once in awhile the music breaks, and the bass player rumbles on in a distorted guttural tone until the rest of the band ram-charges back into it. Highly recommended for those who like their hardcore on the raw noise tip. (SE)
(H:G Fact)

KAPUT KRAUTS – "Quo Vaqdis, Arschlech?" CD

KAPUT KRAUTS is Germany's answer to Fat Wreck Chords of the late '90s. It's well produced, slightly goofy on occasion, melodic, but can kind of rock at times. There are moments when you can hear distinct influences of *Today's Empire, Tomorrow's Ashes*-era PROPAGANDI, and *Survivor*-era FIFTEEN, but with slight hints of NOFX and ANTI-FLAG. Maybe for nostalgic reasons, I find myself kind of liking this, but then becoming immediately embarrassed. (FS)
(Twisted Chords)

KEITZER – "As the World Burns" CD

The second release from this German grindcore/death metal band. My first thought was "raging, tightly produced grindcore," but it's not that simple. There are other sounds thrown in, including death metal, metalcore, and Swedish grind. It's heavy, fast, and brutal, but does have melodic moments (guitars). I love that KEITZER isn't straightforward grind and I like hearing the sounds of German metalcore past. I detect a little MISERY INDEX, MORSER and SAYYADINA. I loved this. (MH)
(Yellow Dog)

KISS THE BOTTLE – "Plein Est" 9"

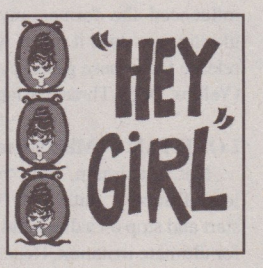
The vocals on this record remind me so much of something I absolutely loved in the '90s, and for the life of me, I can't figure out what the hell it is. It's something that falls smack-dab between the birth of overly scream-y hardcore (i.e. Gravity Records) and a more Revolution Summer/CHINO HORDE style. Around 1993/1994, I felt that France had some of the best emo hardcore bands going, and judging by the label and a few other clues, I have a feeling that KISS THE BOTTLE features at least one member of FINGER PRINT/JASMINE—whom I (still) feel were two of the era's best bands. While, going on name alone, I was expecting more of a JAWBREAKER style, KISS THE BOTTLE has more of a classic '90s "emotional" *hardcore* feel. Lots of dynamic changes, and one or two slow, quiet moments that would normally erupt into chaos; here they simply carry on with a mature (and I mean that in a good way) approach to punk/hardcore. All in all, I like this record and it's kinda refreshing. (JU)
(Stonehenge, 8€ ppd)

LANDED / MEGAFUCKERS – EP

Sounds like both bands may be peripherally associated with punk, but the record doesn't really ever sound like punk music. Last time I reviewed the MEGAFUCKERS I thought that they were in the post punk arena but they almost sound a little art-metal or even experimental noise with some grunge elements. That thought still resonates pretty well with both sides of this record (as I think both bands share members). This isn't bad, but nothing on here really grabs me. (P$)
(Kill Shaman)

LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Near Dark" LP

Portland's LEBENDEN TOTEN is possibly one of the noisiest and also most brilliant bands currently recording music. The brilliance comes from the utter simplicity. A brain-smashing, noisy guitar run through a ton of peddles, and vocals that sound like a screaming child, rabid dog, or just a plain desperate punk. The great rhythm section holds the music together perfectly, while pounding your ears into the ground. *Near Dark* is easily listenable compared to some noise punk records because LEBENDEN TOTEN mixes up the speeds and vocal patterns. I really like the songs "Eat the Life" and "Near



Dark," which kind of remind me of FLUX OF THE PINK INDIANS combined with CONFUSE. I must add that the lyrics are thoughtful, well written, and a perfect narrative for the times that we live in. And these are bloodthirsty times. (WK)
(Wicked Witch)

LOLITA BLACK – "Inside the Wasteland" CD

Debut release by this Providence, RI band. They claim RUDIMENTARY PENI as one of their influences, and I can see a hint of *Death Church* in the riffs and mid-to-slower-tempos, but LOLITA BLACK has much more of a "rock band" feel than that group's weirdo/outsider/insane vibe. The vocalist is not so much SIOUXIE SIOUX as she is Ashley from SIGNAL LOST with the delivery of the guy from CAUSE FOR ALARM—I know that's a weird comparison, but just trust me. Overall, this band would benefit from dirtier, more raw production values—the sterile recording sucks the energy and passion from the music. Though LOLITA BLACK features a member of a much more well known Providence hardcore band, I'm gonna keep it a secret 'cause the two don't really sound like each other. (CS)
(self-released)

LOSER LIFE – "Burning Fields / Hard to Please"

Two new songs from Bakersfield's masters of misery. Layers of melodic guitar squall and hoarse, desperate vocals pound out more of the usual fast, angst-ridden thrash we've come to expect from LOSER LIFE. On this outing there's a tinge of a BORN AGAINST sound creeping into the ARTICLES OF FAITH influence (and the latter influenced the former anyway, so…) but it's not glaring, nor does it affect what is yet another stellar release from these guys. (AM)
(Yellow Dog / Thrashbastard)

LOVE TAN – "Miscellaneous Night Feelings" LP

Not "maximum," nor "rock 'n' roll." Discordant, lots of noodly guitar bits buried in noisy parts that start and stop on a dime and, at moments, seem timed for ultimate irritation. Reaching, they're a bit like the HOSPITALS or MAYYORS (bands I love, by the way), without the crucial rock 'n' roll foundation. Soundtrack to the ultimate Brooklyn hipster loft party. I'd need at least four cans of Sparks to swallow this shit. Or maybe I just don't "get it." (IS)
(Kill Shaman)

MALACHI – "Wither to Cover the Tread" LP

This is intense. Sparse, cello-driven hardcore that is honestly better than any other "epic" HC with cello that I've ever heard. The songs build slowly, as is typical for the genre, making as much out of the spaces between the notes as the notes themselves, and when the heavy parts drop they are HEAVY. The subtle use of electronic noise really augment the songs, which is not always the case with bands that experiment with such touches. If you go apeshit for OROKU, FALL OF EFRAFA, or GRAYCEON, you need this LP *right now*. Hell, if you don't like epic HC punk with non-traditional instrumentation, this is a damn good album to change your opinion. One caveat though: MALACHI is probably much better listened to alone on headphones than blasting at a punk party. This is deep, well written stuff with enough nuance to demand the listener's full attention. (AU)
(Siege of Power / Halo of Flies)

MARGARET THRASHER – "Moderate Rock" LP

This is the first LP by this Vancouver hardcore punk band of major rippers. It's faster and catchier than their previous EP releases and the songs remind me of a lot of current Boston bands like RED THREAD, except with more grating, screamed vocals. The singer belts out the word "fuck" about 145 times on this record, which has got to be some sort of record, and other than that, she sings about being frustrated with meaningless interactions at punk parties that mimic frat life and the gendering of mobility and travel. This record is upbeat and generally a pretty good hardcore release, but sometimes sounds too overproduced to my ears. They kind of lose me with the instrumental track at the end of side A, possibly because it's mostly the vocals and the subject matter of the lyrics that set this band apart for me. The real wild, catchy jam on this record is "Fuck That," which has awesome guitar leads behind vocals that scream, "I hate ravers," a sentiment most can relate to, it seems. (DA)
(P. Trash)

MEDICATION – "Don't Die / Fog"

One-man band MEDICATION strums the guitar, lightly taps the bass drum, and whispers the lyrics. The resulting songs are soft, dreamy, light, and pleasant. (CK)
(HoZac)

MIDDLE CLASS – "Out of Vogue: The Early Material" LP

This LP collects the first two MIDDLE CLASS singles, their *Tooth & Nail* comp tracks, and some other early demos. MIDDLE CLASS' sound is characterized by an edgy, precise guitar sound; hyper, wild drumming; and a vocalist with a dry, monotone, rapid delivery. It's a fact that they were playing ultra quick and tense punk rock in 1978, but I'll leave the debate about whether or not they were the first hardcore band to the history books. These early songs vary from hardcore urgency to post-punk-type sparseness. They do both styles justice, and I actually kinda prefer the darker, rhythmic material. The melodic bass-lines, tense, adventurous guitar work, and spoken vocal style create a cool, stark atmosphere on songs like "A Blueprint for Joy," "Situations," and "Archetype." But again, it's all good, and this collection is recommended to those in favor of the preservation of punk's vast archives. (CI)
(Frontier)

MIDNIGHT WOOLF – "Tropical Disease" CD

With some song titles like "Motor-Psycho Nightmare" (a DYLAN cover) and "River Swamp Stomp," you can pretty much tell what you're getting into here. Perhaps drawing influence from fellow Australian swamp rockers, THE SCIENTISTS, this crew blends together a cosmic mix of garage punk, surf, and blues that would be fitting for a smoky dive bar with tiki torches and lots of girls with Betty Page haircuts eyeing sideburned rocker boys. This actually sounds better than a lot of other bands I've heard doing this genre and the guitar work in particular is pretty impressive. If you're into stuff like THE GUN CLUB or THE CRAMPS, then this is one for you. (BG)
(Off the Hip)

MOB RULES – "The Donor" EP

Ohhh my! Was *not* expecting what I got when the needle dropped on this one! Fuckin' *thick*-as-a-board monster sounds lead by a distorted bass guitar and *tragically fucking unnerved vokills*! Powerviolence played to their own tune—think DISPISE YOU if they weren't from Cali, say…the UK? CITIZENS ARREST meets CROSSED OUT without the baggage of big name comparisons. This 7" is the best I've heard in a while. (RM)
(Zandor)

MORNE – "Demo" LP

MORNE are a Boston-based crust band many of you may have heard of by now. Although this is their first vinyl release, they've managed to create somewhat of a buzz, perhaps due in part to who's involved—members of FILTH OF MANKIND, GRIEF, and DISRUPT, amongst others. But here it would certainly be a mistake to reduce the whole to its individual parts. This record reflects a studied, well-crafted crust behemoth. While obvious reference points are AMEBIX and AXEGRINDER, bands like MISERY and COUNTERBLAST also seem to have informed MORNE's style. This is mostly slow-to-mid-paced (to sometimes fast), mood-driven crust that has much in common with FILTH OF MANKIND. The keyboards may seem so simple that a keyboard player is unnecessary, but don't be mistaken. This record is all about moodiness and the keyboards are prominent. I tend to lean toward the moodiness of samples and more static/erratic noise (think COUNTERBLAST in their less epic moments or DEPRESSOR), but the subtlety here works well. It doesn't totally veer off into epic cheese, yet retains an epic quality. I'm interested to hear the future of MORNE and to hear their re-recorded versions of these songs, especially since the high-end might benefit from a little more volume in the mix. That aside, this strikes me as a masterpiece of its genre. (DB)
(No Options)

MOTHER NIGHT – "Lifestyle / Deathstyle" CD

Besides having a terrible title for their CD, this band managed to make somewhat of a good impression with me within the usually not so creative style of metallic hardcore. Mixing influences from BLACK SABBATH, modern hardcore, and metal, this band manages to steer away from becoming just another band within their homogenous scene. I'd recommend this CD to anyone who's into heavy metallic hardcore, although tattoo flash on records needs to stop. (PL)
(Off the Books)

NATIVE TONGUE – "Blame It on Gravity" LP

This Boston band existed in the early '80s alongside THE PROLETARIAT and MISSION OF BURMA, and shared many of the same influences. They released one LP and an EP, and this album compiles fifteen choice tracks from those. Danceable (but not disco) beats, rumbling bass-lines, discordant post-punk guitar, and moody vocals combine to create a darker, more atmospheric sound than

BURMA; more early BAUHAUS than WIRE. This sounds great and it's kind of weird that it's taken this long for the band to see some reissue action, considering the light shone on so many of their contemporaries (in location and sound) of late. Still, better late than never, and an essential pick for anyone disappointed in the output of the reunited GANG OF FOUR. (AM)
(Rave Up)

NERVOUS TICS – "Stupid Little Heart" EP

Old Howlin' Hot Dog from the RADIO REELERS has gone pop! Shock. Horror. Fuck, this disc smokes. I am a sucker for the background organ. This band totally sound like old Canadian bands like THE YOUNG CANDIANS, PINK STEEL, CRASH KILLS FIVE, etc. which has always been an absolute fave genre of mine. Sure it's wimpy, but it's totally hooky. Rockin'. (TB)
(Meaty Beaty)

NK6 – "Yellow Beauty" EP

Oh, what a pretty little intro, so soft and serene. Yeah, right! In follows the Tokyo chaos from NK6—fast, pounding hardcore tuneage on this disk. Pulling from obvious influences such as GAUZE, NK6 do a great job and putting their own touch to the tunes. This EP was released for their European tour. Cool. (MS)
(Yellow Dog / Thrashbastard)

NO GOAL – "Vital" EP

NO GOAL's demo 7" was hands-down the toughest-sounding, non-thuggy straight edge hardcore record of the millennium, but this new 7" is a bit of a departure from that. The vocalist from the demo has since moved to guitar due to blowing out his voice. At first I was quite disappointed at this milder version of the force they once were but upon further listens I am very pleased with this record. The A-side is a titan of straightforward early-Revelation-style youth crew hardcore with some modern nuances that only help to strengthen its appeal—probably the best take on the style I've heard in quite some time. The B-side is where this record really steps out—in the middle there is this weird instro break, very similar to something you'd expect FUCKED UP to do nowadays, and it really works for me in the context. I officially love this record. (JU)
(Third Party)

OUTCLASSED – "This Could Coinsidence, But I Swear I Saw the Street Lights Dance" 12"

Note: the title of the album above is *exactly* as it appears on the record, misspelling, bad grammar and all. OUTCLASSED is a pretty straightforward screamo band from Pittsburgh, PA. Their record layout might make you think that you're in for some really bad indie rock, though: terribly drawn floating heads, bottles, cigarettes and other objects in an elementary school style, with lyrics handwritten in a cursive scrawl, replete with misspellings and crossed-out words. Ugh. Musically, this reminds me of COMADRE, ORCHID or earlier FUNERAL DINER. It's not as good as any of the aforementioned, but not bad either. This is a one-sided 12" on pretty split black/white vinyl, and it comes with a free CD for those of you who might be analog-impaired. (VX)
(Forcefield)

OUT OF ORDER – "Open Prison" LP

Some 27 years after their LP was first reviewed in *MRR*, I get the reish, which contains the LP, 7", and some demos. A German band fronted by an English squaddie, their 7" is pretty typical of second-tier bands of the time, like the ACCURSED or any of the bands on Rot and Fallout. Y'know—totally respectable 1-2-1-2 punk with snarled vocals. Where this band really shines is when they drop into the tribal, CRISIS-style dark punk, complete with organ. Those songs all come from their LP, and when they hit their stride they are great. A lot of old band reissues are a real waste of time, but this is totally worthwhile, especially on tracks like "WW3" and "Ministry Bureaucracy." Fans of old UK punk, track this down. (TB)
(Uberfall)

PHOTOBOOTH – "Da Me Tus Besos" EP

Three songs of wall-of-crud basement pop. The A-side rips off everyone from THE MONKS (*heavily*) to the BAY CITY ROLLERS but somehow gets away with it, ending up sounding both classic and very much of the future at the same time. So catchy, you won't get it out of your head. The songs on the flip are more your typical garage-y rock 'n' roll but are still infectious. Good debut. (AM)
(Daggerman)

PIERCED ARROWS – "Paranoid / Ain't Life Strange"

The Coles of DEAD MOON fame are back with more gritty (so gritty) lo-fi rock 'n' roll that is equal parts hopeful serenade and melancholy remembrance. These two cuts are the slow jams that come at the end of a perfect night. Those put your arms around the person next to you, and sway as you sing moments. If you love the mono, whisky-drenched odyssey that was DEAD MOON, you will love PIERCED ARROWS too. I do. (AA)
(Tombstone Music)

PIG HEART TRANSPLANT – "Nature / Nurture"

PIG HEART TRANSPLANT is the project band of IRON LUNG's guitar-stro, Jon Kortland, with a revolving cast filling out the band for each of the two songs. On this record, he is backed by members of WALLS, BRAINOIL, GET HUSTLE (?) and two others that I can't remember right now. The A-side track is a really inventive take on a noisy, repetitive, SWANS-style bass-driven industro-punk riff with vocals that you'd more commonly associate with underground black metal—distorted, effected, high-pitched screaming. While the flip is a similar take on the same style, it doesn't hit quite as hard and the repetition seems more robotic in a not-so-great way. Still, this is another winner of a single from a consistently weird label. I will (and have already) recommend this to the more adventurous of the punxes. (JU)
(Deer Healer)

THE POPE – "Live AIDS / Free Tibet" EP

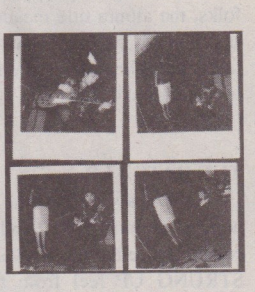
This record is all over the place. The A-side consists of one, possibly two tracks of off-kiltered, heavily distorted bass and drums, complete with backwards masking and high-pitched yelping, while the B-side starts with percussion instruments for about two minutes, than launches into a 30-second blast-beat before ending. First side channels GODHEADSILO while second relies upon GYORGY LIGETI, the YouTube video of Burt and Ernie playing grindcore (look it up), and the *Simon Says* video game for inspiration. Buyers: you've been warned. (VL)
(Yosada)

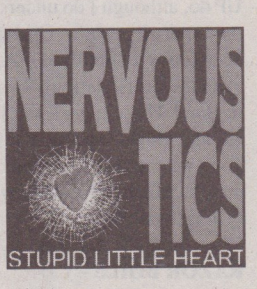
PYROKLAST – "The Crisis Has Begun" CD

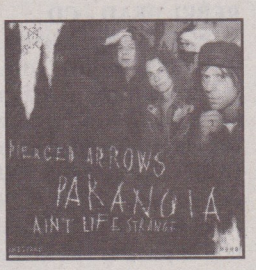
This looks generic and gets off to a rocky start. The first song is not that good; the music is limp and the singer is trying to fit too many words in too little of a song. I would have put this one in the middle of the release, try to cover it up with the stand-outs that follow. So, I had little hope for the disc heading into track two. But then each track after just slapped me silly—unrelenting and pulverizing fast hardcore with metallic overtones, reminding me of a cross between POISON IDEA's *War All the Time* LP and the classic CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE 7". Listened to it a few times and am still impressed. Put that first song third and press these five songs onto vinyl ASAP! (VL)
(self-released)

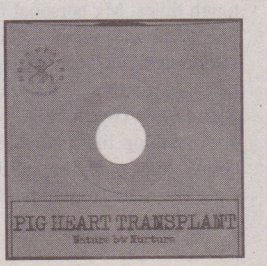
RATAS DEL VATICANO – "Mocosos Pateticos" LP

This is some primitive punk rock from Mexico. Simple









rhythms with urgent vocals recorded poorly with too much high-end. Just the kind of shit I love. It's old-school punk, it's garage punk, it's post-punk, there's some surf-y sounds mixed in. Who cares? Add it all in, it sounds great. Blaring through speakers of the *MRR* stereo, the songs were having a hard time cutting through all the chit-chattering going on around this place. But once I got some headphones on, it was a different story entirely. That's the way to listen to this record. Turn it up! Ignore everyone else in the room. For all you non-Spanish speaking folks, the album title means "pathetic kids" and I'd say right on, if these musicians didn't look like baby-faced kids themselves. Perhaps it's self-referential. In that case, all right. (CK)
(Siltbreeze)

THE RATS – LP

These cats are from Umeå, Sweden, with notable alumni from bands outta Sweden's punk capital. Once the record was on, I got an immediate STRUNG UP feel from these guys. They don't command the straight-up apeshit factor STRUNG UP do, although I do understand that these dudes put on a *crazy* live show. Unabashed '80s HC worship; I hear heavy POISON IDEA, Rollins-era FLAG, and even the ever-hilarious Ray of Today yell from time to time! These guys seem to be having fun kicking ass and playing shows, but I think we all could have gone without another mediocre US hardcore rehash record, which is basically what this is. (RM)
(Thrashbastard)

RAZOR BOILS – CD

Anti-fascist Oi-core from Moscow, and that, my comrade, is enough for me to take my hat off to. In a city that boasts a scary amount of deaths at the hands of fascists, being anti is way more than a fashion statement/phase/fade/trendy punk statement. It's a life and death commitment—solidarity all 'round. Anyways, on to the music. Super tough, rough, and burly, like LIFE'S BLOOD mixed with early SLAPSHOT, with a nice hint of the ANTI-HEROES. It's pit-friendly, politically suave, with a cover depicting a great big bear decapitating a bunch of SS storm troopers—hooray to that. (SD)
(Boycott the Fencewalkers)

REBEL DEAD – CD

Well... I have a love/hate thing going on with the REBEL DEAD. I love some songs on this CD and maybe "hate" is too strong a word, but I really don't like a few of them either. This CD falls straight into the category of street punk along the lines of the HUDSON FALCONS, DUCKY BOYS, or maybe (but not quite) THOSE UNKNOWN, which are all bands that I like a lot! REBEL DEAD looks the part of a respectable blue-collar bunch of guys, and the songs are chock-full of working class lyrics about getting drunk, working hard, and getting through tough times. My personal favorite songs are "Three Sheets to the Wind," "Long Island Is Sinking," "Bottomed Out," and "Break Me Down." The songs that lose me though are the ones that sound like an attempt at a psychobilly style, like ELVIS HITLER or something like that. If REBEL DEAD sticks to doing street punk, hopefully they'll be a band that we'll see more from in the future! (ML)
(Motherbox)

RED MASS – "Radio Radio" 12"

RED MASS is a Canadian collective, seemingly fronted by ex-CPC GANGBANGS member Choyce. There are four songs on this EP and the thing I like about this record is that each song sounds totally different. I hate it when bands show off their musicianship and blend too many genres into one song but that's not what's going on here, perhaps because this is more of a collaborative effort. The first song sounds a lot like BOYS NEXT DOOR. The second song is more of an electo-industrial, angular pop song, and my personal favorite. The first song on the second side has a simple rock beat with ALAN VEGA-like vocals (i.e. lots-o-echo) and with some melodica thrown in at the end. The final song sounds like a fucked-up take on early '80s English post-punk, with some sloppy use of trumpet and clarinet over electronic noise. There is enough consistency throughout the record to make the different styles blend into one nice record. (MU)
(Psychic Handshake)

REPOMAN – "Quality Time" EP

Fuck yes! This is an "Australian Rules" rock 'n' roll scrimmage from hell! These psychotic punks from Sydney capture the thrash mania started in Orange County, California when that dangerous area was occupied by Costa Mesa skins and punks that thought BLACK FLAG was the best punk band in existence! (They were right!) The disparate similarities between New South Wales and Southern California are easily demonstrated with the REPOMAN *Quality Time* EP. Side A smashes you in the face with "Going Insane" and "Discharged." Fuck! This is Brutal Thrash with a capital "B"! The vocals are possessed by demons! The guitars churn deep in your bowels! Get the fuck out of the way! The B-side features "Push Me Too Far" and "Radiation," with all the thrash imperatives in place! Yes! The excellent REPOMAN EP has brilliant chugging punk guitar sound coupled with some top-notch hardcore vocals. Get this EP as soon as possible! (BR)
(self-released)

SAVAGE LAND – "Honor Among Thieves" EP

All right, what we have here is a pretty standard "modern hardcore" band—lyrics about dissatisfaction with life, lots of breakdowns, a few '80s metal solos. They should be on Bridge 9 soon. Fans of CRUEL HAND or COLD WORLD will like this. (PL)
(Tension Head)

SCREWTOP DETONATORS – "3, 2, 1, I'm Done" CD

Post-RANCID, melodic CLASH-style punk from Australia. It's very catchy and very poppy, and could have major label/alternative radio aspirations. I don't know—it's very slick. It's definitely got a glam slant—I know it sounds terrible but it's pretty well done, a bit poncey for this fanzine's readership I'm sure. (AD)
(Off the Hip)

SEA MONSTERS – "Livin' on Love ...and Other Notes from the Killing Floor" CD

According to the onesheet, SEA MONSTER is the "stuff of legend" and have been around since 1986. This is truly abysmal and mundane bar rock with horrible vocals and boring bar rock riffs. So damn terrible that I can feel every precious second of my life slip by as it is foolishly wasted listening to this fucking train-wreck of a CD. I bet that they think that they sound like the Stooges. Thanks, but no thanks. (SE)
(Winged Disk)

SECOND OPINION – "Youth Revolt" CD

The Bay Area's own SECOND OPINION brings the fastcore thrash jams to you with this 18-song CD. For the most part this is straight-ahead thrash with breakdowns and the occasional rock and roll riff. The accented back-ups really work for this band. SECOND OPINION is from the same family as other Bay Area bands like ECOLI and NIGHTSTICK JUSTICE who rip out the hardcore for the youth. This CD includes five live tracks and a demo track. (SE)
(625 Thrash)

SEX PISTOLS – "100 Club Punk Rock Festival" LP

Cruddy-sounding bootleg of our PISTOLS tossing out some drudgy versions of their K-Tel classics to a bunch of odds and sods wankers who had mod haircuts and spiffy suits a year prior. Trade Mark of Quality is an old bootleg label that (I believe) put out the first DYLAN boot, *The Great White Wonder*, which is really a keeper—pick it up if you can. Buy this if you recently came into millions of dollars and wish to purchase every single piece of vinyl related to Steve Jones. (BB)
(bootleg)

SHELL SHOCK – "Execution Time" LP

Kind of disappointing reissue LP of "New Orleans' first hardcore band," SHELL SHOCK. *Execution Time* features the 'SHOCK's first two EPs (from '81 and '86, respectively) and some unreleased '87 demo material—though some of the songs attributed to the EPs are actually demo recordings, so I'm not sure I trust the info on the back of the record. The earliest tracks on here are proto-HC—basically high-energy punk rock—and while it was probably pretty killer back in 1981 Louisiana, it hasn't really aged too well and doesn't stand up compared to the good stuff from that era. The tracks from the second EP are kinda like a poor-man's mid-period FLAG minus the wild Ginn wankery, and the demo material shows SHELL SHOCK moving in a more metallic direction; one song lifts the melody to the *Halloween* theme to great (albeit corny) effect. Overall the sound quality is rather poor compared to the original vinyl (which didn't exactly have YES-level production values to begin with, if you know what I'm sayin'), and while I'm glad that someone cared enough to preserve this document of early US punk, I won't be tracking down a copy for myself. As an interesting footnote, members of the final line-up of SHELL SHOCK went on to play in EYEHATEGOD, CROWBAR, and DOWN. (CS)
(Mindless/Rave Up)

THE SIC KIDZ – "Teenage Obsessions" LP

Whereas legions of punk bands heard THE RAMONES, and picked up guitars thinking, "I can do that!" it sounds like THE SIC KIDZ had the same thought after hearing THE CRAMPS. The first two songs (from '78) sound like any semi-inept punk band just starting out, but by the third song, "Frenzy" ('81), they nail THE CRAMPS' sound.

Primitive drumming, songs about zombies, the whole bit. A few years later they strayed and started sounding more like a standard indie/garage band from '84 (think an overly polished CHESTERFIELD KINGS), complete with an overproduced cover of THE ALARM CLOCKS' "No Reason to Complain." No live filler like most Rave Up releases. (IS)
(Rave Up)

SILLA ELÉCTRICA – "Cloaca" EP

Madrid's SILLA ELÉCTRICA spits 'n' spills their hooks all over the place. The guitars just slice on through the mix, piercing in a way that is usually only achieved by the classics. But SILLA ELÉCTRICA doesn't reside in the past, and they've effectively updated the sound to the here-and-now. Their approach is viewed through the same warped lenses that bands like TYRADES and GORILLA ANGREB have previously adorned, and the SILLAS have added some awesomely catchy Spanish vocals. They've got one boy and one girl shouting at each other, and sometimes singing in agreement over the disjointed harmonies. It's too infectious, and now I'm gonna be kept up all night by the tapping of my foot to the tunes in my head. (CI)
(Solo Para Punks)

SLIPS – "False Forventninger" 10"

This veteran Norwegian band hits their peak on this record with their cover of THE DEAD BOYS' "(I'm a) Dead Boy," a raw version with slightly over-modulated vocals and rude production, but the rockin' mid-tempo punk becomes even more uncontrolled on their bonus live track. Otherwise, it's a familiar style: rockish punk with tasteful lead guitar breaks and shouted vocal choruses. The more tightly written tunes fare better, but the messy punk sound is perfect when it all falls together—which it does more than half the time (SS)
(Hit Me)

THE SNOT ROCKETTES – "Prom Night Massacre / Teenager in Love"

Imagine four hotties delivering '50s/'60s-influenced, faster-paced pop punk. Their choice of a song to cover (the B-side) is fitting. I will say that it is well done and you'll likely see it on my top ten. (KK)
(Todo Destruido)

SOCIAL SICKNESS – "Social Security" EP

This Riverside outfit combines its experience with terse, one-minute-plus hardcore for twelve songs, which get better the louder you play them. The style isn't unlike a mix of SOA (short, no-nonsense blasts of noise) and early MDC (urgent, simple song structures), though you can also sense skate-rock influences. The basic style is rather familiar, but SOCIAL SICKNESS profits from simple production that makes these short songs appealing. Good for the style. (SS)
(Flat Back)

SOMETHING FIERCE – "Modern Girls" EP

This is what I love about being a reviewer here at *MRR*—the opportunity to discover some really cool bands that I would probably have never heard of otherwise… and SOMETHING FIERCE from Houston, TX is one of those bands!! These four songs remind me a little bit of older BRIEFS stuff, or our local boys here in SF, the YOUNG OFFENDERS. This is upbeat and catchy with a little bit of snide punk rock attitude. If you're a fan of what Dirtnap Records or Deranged Records have been blessing us with over the years then you should definitely get this EP and check out this band!! (ML)
(Bitchin' Riffage)

SOMETHING FIERCE – "There Are No Answers" CD

Houston's best little secret, which like all the other nuggets of gold currently come out of Texas should be public domain. This is a gem of a record from start to finish—an adrenaline rush of hooks, choruses, and some of the cleverest pop writing since those BUZZCOCKS fellas picked up their guitars. It's got that MARKED MEN X-factor, that UK '79 buzz, and a fine indie sensibility that reminds me a hell of a lot of THE PIXIES. This is one of those special records that just grows and grows with every listen till you're head-over-heels in love with it. They're coming to my town in two weeks and I've already booked a day off work and got my drinking exercise routine in full effect—now all I gotta do is bring this record home, learn all the words, and get my dance moves polished to perfection. A brilliant record by a brilliant band. (SD)
(self-released)

SPACE CRETINS – "Direct From the Superfreak Highway" CD

It's so great to hear something these days that rocks, but doesn't easily fall into a cookie-cutter genre. How does one classify this band? Well, imagine if KISS were more of a glam punk band than they actually were (I'm talking about the music). Or what about a pre-cowboy-hat SUPERSUCKERS with say, Sonny Vincent from THE TESTORS on vocals? This is great rock and roll punk for the sleazy, booze-soaked, leather-pants-wearing cretin crowd. Yes, I'm talking to you! (BG)
(Killing Pig)

SPIDER BAGS – "Hey Delinquents" EP

Chapel Hill's SPIDER BAGS' first single and second recording is scratchy and catchy. It features two songs that are both bluesy, lo-fi, and rockin', reminding me of bands that alcoholic stoners who work at record stores would dig (i.e. GUIDED BY VOICES fans, but maybe that's just because there's a dude smoking pot from a Busch beer can on the cover). But if you are into that sort of thing, this is pretty good. Stats for the nerds: first 100 hundred copies on colored vinyl, B-side produced by CAMERO WEREWOLF, ex-DC SNIPERS. (MU)
(Daggerman)

THE SPURTS – "What Goes Around" EP

Three tracks of country-tinged garage punk. Part SOLEDAD BROTHERS, part REIGNING SOUND, part TELEVISION, and a nice piece of THE DEADLY SNAKES. It's got the groovers, the smoothers, and the midnight movers. I like it—in fact, I seem to like it lot 'cause I'm about to give it a second spin. (SD)
(Desert Island)

SUBTLE TURNHIPS – "F* The People/F* the Power" EP

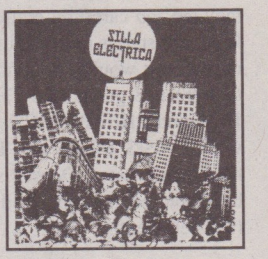
Hozac not-gold big hole English accent Crass records, good not CRASS not boring pleasant guitar bass drums. English people like good review. A-Side Great Job B-Side Pleasant Job. Congratulations. Like. (BB)
(HoZac)

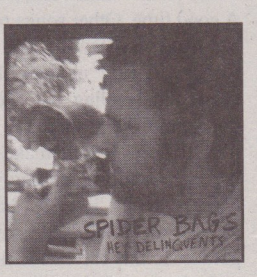
SUDDEN WALKS – "Haulin Ass, Gettin' Paid" EP

Fast and hard-hitting garage punk that recalls THE REATARDS at some of their finer moments. Well done—perfectly done even, down to the nice, heavy low-end. Lotsa blown-out bass and everything sounds on the edge of blasting into the red in a great way…but it's well-tread territory. Perfect if you miss the good ol' red-faced, smashing bottles, screaming JAY REATARD. (IS)
(FDH / P. Trash)

TAKE OFFENSE – "Peace in Death" EP

A tough straight edge crossover sound but with lyrics about how life sucks—see lines like "I don't matter, I am nothing" and "Life has value? Well I'm not worth to much." Slight metal leanings (SLAYER) including guitar solos but this still has a clear youth crew sound. Lots of bald heads, a CRO-MAGS shirt, and an image of the reaper on the cover. "Unconcerned" had one





surprise, which was very clean, soft GREY MATTER sounding vocals. The B-side starts off with a mosh part and "Walks of Life" really drags on. The track feels like a cliché but has a clearly '80s metal guitar solo. "Solitary Pass" starts out '80s thrash metal all the way. WARZONE and middle-era AGNOSTIC FRONT come to mind. (MH)
(Mind Disease)

THE TEENERS – "Gold" EP

For fans of faster-paced hardcore, these Austin folks deliver three thrash-like cuts on this one-sided release of 300 discs. The songs are good and they're well played, but the band doesn't do much to distinguish itself and the recording is on the thin side. A solid, if not groundbreaking, effort. (KK)
(Super Secret, $4 ppd)

TENNISCOURTS – "Dig the New Sounds of Tenniscourts" CD

Super-slick radio-ready songs that are jumping on the power-pop bandwagon so hard the wheels almost broke off their axles. Yes, these folk know their way around a carefully crafted pop hook. The problem is they are *too* carefully crafted; every guitar lick and keyboard stab is in the right place. This band's edge is so dull it wouldn't cut hot butter. They are trying to reference greats like THE BUZZCOCKS, THE JAM, and CHEAP TRICK, but come off like a piss-weak OASIS tribute act. The verdict: yes, catchy, hook-laden tunes. Does it stir the passions, set the heartbeat racing? I'm afraid not. (AM)
(self-released)

TESTORS – "Live Recordings 1976-1979 LP"

Wowza, this packaging is great! So many fliers and a poster! The sound on this is awesome, the songs even better. Recorded live from '76-'79 at the Ritz, Hot Club, Max's, and CBGB's, this record is just seething with urgency and an element of danger like shit's about to GO OFF! On this beast of a platter there are songs like "You Don't Break My Heart" where there is this tension that has you on edge, and you can sense something bubbling just under the surface might explode. Then you got the party jams like "Let's Get Zooed Out" or "MK Ultra," and it's like being drunk and doing a whip-it, or some Video Head cleaner, and it's all wah waaahhh wahh. A good time. Other songs remind one of, say, taking too many Oxycontins and feeling a little nauseous for like twenty minutes, but then drinking some beers and leveling out and dancing and having a good time. Then there are some totally fun ragers like "I See," which makes ya want to bounce of the walls and roll around with a friend and break bottles. "Don't Tell Me" has this cocky swagger to it; basically TESTORS *rule*. I feel as if I can totally get lost in this record rocking out in my own world or bedroom what have you. Like the line in "MK Ultra," this record'll want to make you "go insane"! (RR)
(Incognito)

TIMEBOMBS – "Kill Music" EP

Fuzzy 1-2-3-4 hardcore with scratchy vocals and tons of raw energy. Pretty cool stuff on this four-track EP. These kids seem to be having fun doing this shit. Looking through the lyric sheet makes me think of the halls at my school where kids are obnoxiously screaming offensive shit at each other. It's silly. (MS)
(Flat Black)

TIPPER'S GORE – "Unsettling Loss" EP

Yes sir! TIPPER'S GORE has a fucking crazed thrash attack for you! The brand new *Unsettling Loss* EP available on Flat Black Records is more of TIPPER'S GORE's patented manic thrash. This shit will burn your gonads off if you aren't careful! Side A starts off with the title cut, "Unsettling Loss." This song has some bleak lyrics about life: "Happens in an instant, no forewarning sign / Said to be an act, understood by the divine / Unsettling loss, life marked by a crooked cross / Melancholy gloom, life restricted to an eternal tomb." Those are happy thoughts! Song two is "Talk for Me," and goes like this: "Engage in confrontation, due to a suspected lie / Approach it so abrasively, because you think I'll deny / But all that I have given is pure truth and honesty / Before I'm done talking, you start to talk for me." Yes! The frustration of dealing with day-to-day circumstances in this society continues on the B-side in "I'm Disappointed" ("Desperately trying to regain lost time") and in "Get Up" ("A force-fed view of so-called reality makes you yearn for a release") as well as in "Grown Old" ("Destroy all you have until there's nothing left"). The great thing about TIPPER'S GORE is that all these succinct perceptions about life are delivered with a mind-boggling thrash attack! This is a very strong record! (BR)
(Flat Black)

TOO MANY DAVES – "2008: A Shit Faced Odyssey" EP

Wow! Well, my good buddy Brace Belden had this to say: "This is total co-worker rock. Like, if the guy you work the day shift with at Hot Dog On A Stick at Stonestown had a band with his two unemployed buddies, and his cousin put out a 7". It seriously sounds like a mix between SLOPPY SECONDS and SUM 41. But it's also a record with two revolutionary and striking details: 1.) 'Couchsurfing U.S.A.' consists entirely of fingertapping, and 2.) This has to be the first non-rap record to have a song with a lyric about Nintendo Wii. God Bless America." I can stand behind it. But I'll add that this sounds like if D4 met a mongoloid NOFX in a bath house and they scraped all the ejaculate off the tiles and towels and made a test tube baby. Said baby would be TOO MANY DAVES, complete with Monkeys and Pabst Blue Ribbon cans as art work. Total blah, gross, unnecessary, surf/skate/snowboard pop punk douchebaggery. (RR)
(Kiss of Death)

TORCHBEARER – CD

Damn, listening to this CD is like taking a time machine back to the mid/late-'90s. I can imagine Edison Records being all over this back in the day. Clearly these guys are big fans of that era's technical metal-core bands like BOTCH and COALESCE. This is actually really fucking solid for what it is. The recording is fantastic, the riffs come off as crunchy and sharp, and the low end sounds amazing. The only real musical misstep is the long spoken word passages in "Voltaire." That shit was played back then, and it isn't any fresher today. While some might question their relevance to today's hardcore scene, I can't fault 'em. They clearly love this style and they do it really fucking well. (AU)
(self-released, no info)

TOTAL FURY – "Ears Go Deaf" LP

I'm confused here. I mean, why make a ripping ten-song LP and limit it to 500 tour copies? Well, these guys are known for sometimes making several pressings of their records, so hopefully you'll be able to find this somewhere because it's fantastic. TOTAL FURY, as you should know by now, pay tribute to the pantheon of early-'80s DC hardcore, and do it quite well. What makes this album—which features a very cool silver and black silk-screened cover by the way—so worthy is that they've changed their sound a bit and are coming into their own. Things have slowed down just a notch, but the total speed and, er, fury that you expect is still here, and there's a GOVERNMENT ISSUE cover, just to stay in tradition. This is essential, of course. (BG)
(self-released)

TROUBLEKID – "Identity Crisis" CD

A pretty good trio here. Although the songs could be a bit better, these two gals and a guy have a DISTILLERS thing going on with some nice simple punk guitar riffing over raspy gal vocals. A German combo that keeps it punk and catchy. Maybe a little STITCHES, too. (RL)
(Wanda)

THE UBANGIS – "Drop Another Coin" CD

Surf-ish guitar and neo-rockabilly elements abound here, making it easy to make a CRAMPS reference (covering JOHNNY CASH's song from the sleaze noir classic *Five Minutes to Live* makes such a comparison even easier), with a big dose of late-'90s Fonzie Punk (not surprising, since the liner notes say this was originally released in 1997). The production is pretty odd, with very prominent vocals that tend towards crooning. I'm not sure what they were trying to do, so I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. (DD)
(Brutarian Quarterly)

THE UBANGIS – "Exploit Yourself" CD

Simultaneously over-produced and badly produced garage that harks back to the bad ol' days of the '90s. Lackluster, weak, hook-less drivel that puts this dud straight to the freebie bin. (SD)
(Brutarian Quarterly)

ULTIMO RAUSEA – "Melhen Girl Meriken Boy" CD

Not a good way to start a CD—I think the first song is atrocious. The worst song I've heard in a long time. Some sort of noisy emo with the worst out-of-tune vocals I could imagine. The rest of the CD is solid overblown Japanese thrash. I love the chaotic noisy sound, and like bands such as CONGA FURY, they record everything loud and blown-out. Three of the seven tracks are taken from their *Melhen* 7". The six raging hardcore tracks didn't make up for the first track, though. (MH)
(Bloodbath)

ULTIMO RESORTE – "La Larga Sombra Del Punk" LP

I heard a rumor that this reissue was going to happen, and could hardly contain my excitement. ULTIMO RESORTE is one of the greatest classic-era

Spanish punk bands, which is really saying something because Spanish punk is untouchable. Silvia's voice is somewhere between Exene and the singer from VULPESS—searing, haunting yet also tough and vicious. This record contains the first 7", which is almost hardcore-sounding with Silvia's light-speed staccato vocals, super blown-out guitars, a loose, almost falling-apart rhythm section, tough-as-shit back-up vocals, and mutant synth in places. The guitar on "Anticristro" is so fucking punk and rad—it starts out with this spidery riff that reminds me of a more street-punk VOID guitar sound. The band's 12" is on the B-side. It's definitely more epic—darker and moodier and more drawn-out, but in a really cool punk way—doomed and garage-y, not like fucking JOURNEY or something. The booklet is incredible. There are reproductions of tons of fliers and zine articles and reviews. The photos of the band are super awesome too, so punk and dreamy… Anyway, in an ocean of reissues of so-so bands, this stands out—a classic that your record collection is calling out for. Silvia is famous for punching out Nancy Spungeon. The punkest! (LG)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

ULTRA TUMBADOS – "Requiem Para Una Decada" EP

ULTRA TUMBADOS are a part of the raging Latino punk scene that is thriving in Chicago at the moment. This three-piece switches things up a bit with some dual-vocal action and a poppy momentum carried by enthusiastic chants that undoubtedly make this band super fun to see live. Their songs are all over the place, some taking the slower, more melodic and catchy route, while others are reminiscent of older Latino punk and exude a darker, more brooding tone. I've heard comparisons to LOS MONJO and ESKORBUTO, which I don't necessarily hear, especially from side A, but the first jam on side B could pass. All the songs have a sloppy quality to them that I can appreciate, but sometimes the vocals are a bit too off-key for my tastes. (DA)
(Todo Destruido)

VITAMIN PARTY – "Back on Task" CD

Usually when I get something to review once and it's not great, I'm willing to give it the benefit of the doubt, realizing that the band has room to grow and blossom. When I get something to review a second time and it's just as bad as the first, I'm less inclined to be hopeful. After their first CD I was hoping they could study THE STATUES or THE TRANZMITORS and expound upon their flirtation with THERMALS-style jams. But they didn't. They still sound like an alt-rock MODERN MACHINES. The alt-rock vibe doesn't come through in the speed of the music as much as it does in the vibe of the songs. Also, on their website these dudes have a video of themselves playing live with really lame choreographed dance moves. That's kinda unacceptable. It's not that I don't appreciate their flair for choreography and love of synchronized crouching, it's that their delivery and manner of doing it is pretty tacky. (P$)
(Get It Out!)

CHESTER VOMIT AND THE DRY HEAVES – "Stunk Rocker" EP

So about thirty years ago, this dude Chester Vomit, primarily known for his drum skillz in Chicago bands THE POPPERZ and THE MARTIAN PLAN, picked up a guitar and penned some pretty killer garage punk. There's a RAMONES-type guitar sound, but as a whole this doesn't really sound too much like THE RAMONES. It's catchy but without sacrificing speed or some pretty aggressive playing. This dude Chester, cheek bejeweled with a clothespin (apparently he wasn't into needles, so there would be no safety pins), took a break from drumming to play guitar and handle vocals on this. The four songs on here weren't released on vinyl until now, which is kind of hard to believe, 'cause this is good. (P$)
(Rave Up)

WE NEED TO TALK – "It's Not Us, It's You" EP

Nine songs of pissed-off, heavy hardcore from four New Orleans punks. Fast and abrasive with throat-scraping vocals and some crushing sludge parts. Lyrics deal with the effects of Hurricane Katrina on the poor, religion (anti), civilization (anti), the "scene" (ambivalent), and the limitations of communication mediated through computers. Reminds me at times of DEADGUY or RORSCHACH, maybe even THE END OF THE CENTURY PARTY. Limited to 600 copies, with nicely silk-screened and letter-pressed covers and pressed on a variety of colors of vinyl. Really, really fucking good. (VX)
(IFB Records / Human Crush / One Eye)

THE WITHDRAWLS – "Paranoid Delusions of Grandeur" EP

It used to be fairly common for punk bands to employ snotty teenage-ish vocals that sounded almost nasal at times, especially early hardcore bands. Think of bands like THE SIMPLETONES and THE STITCHES. Well, THE WITHDRAWLS have brought this back and they do it extremely well. This one is very punk, in a hardcore, almost surf sort of way—very catchy and very "fuck you." It looks like it's limited to 100, so I'd suggest you get your ass in gear if you want one. (KK)
(Black Lung)

LOS YORKS – "69" 10"

Ten lost treasures from that ever-prolific purveyor of the Latino garage sound, Peru. More twang than fuzz brings to mind the less bluesy side of the YARDBIRDS with a hint of a more subdued MUSIC MACHINE, all made unique with the South American flavor. It's urgent, it's got the breaks to fill the floor, and enough of that garage brood to wipe the smile off the misunderstood '60s youth. Did I mention the great surf guitar? Some of the best '60s South American garage that I feasted my retro loving ears on in a long, long time. (SD)
(Electro Harmonix)

ZOMBINA AND THE SKELETONES – "Monsters on 45" CD

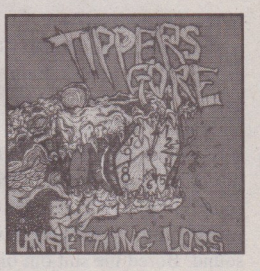
What we have here is a singles collection from a Liverpool band that attempts a mash-up of the corny elements of THE MISFITS' horror aesthetic, and filters it through a '60s pop/girl group sound with touches of THE RENTALS (the one with Matt Sharp from WEEZER, not the other one). More often than not this ends up feeling like a lost episode of *The Munsters* where they run into Gidget and Moondoggy on the beach and proceed to learn how to surf. The only problem with that is the CD is missing the requisite laugh track. (JU)
(Brutarian Quarterly)

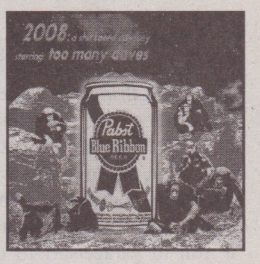
ZYANOSE – "Lovele SS" EP

Well shit, this thing's already been burning up my turntable at home for two weeks now. This is radically different from the first 7" on Guerilla Records due to some line-up changes. Still noisy, of course, with a two bass line-up that adds an interesting twist to the noise-punk style. The A side consists of four frantic blasts of bass-heavy hardcore not dissimilar to DEFECTOR (whom ZYANOSE share members with). Side B is an interesting experiment—one seven-minute CHAOS UK-ish burner with two extra vocalists and one less bass. As always, if the label says Crust War, buy it. (AU)
(Crust War)

V/A – "Goot from the Boot" LP

Yet another re-issue of some cool shit that has become impossible to find. Here is old Italy brought back from the death. The record starts with GREY SHADOW a dark-wave band à la JOY DIVISION but sung with an Italo/English accent, which rules! Actually, most stuff on side A is moody and atmospheric punk. The highlight for me is CANI, who are just amazing.





Their first track is a bit odd compared to the 7", but that tough punk spirit comes at us on track two. JUGGERNAUT tears into some hyper punk with nice energy. The same goes for PUTRID FEVER, who delivers the more aggressive hardcore here. The record ends with a band called FUNNY FASHION who I could see appealing to fans of DIGITAL LEATHER or other electro punk damage out there. It is still cool hearing a record like this, because it has held up so well after 23 years. Great! (MS)
(Gonna Puke)

V/A – "Incestival" EP

I hate compilation EPs. I mean, really, how often are you going to play them? None of these bands are bad by any means but its pretty much a yawnfest all round. NEW MEXICAN DISASTER SQUAD sounds like LIFETIME; POLLUTED YOUTH play discordant, driving politico punk; GATORFACE sounds like NOFX; and VIRGINS sounds like a super rough youth crew band mixed with the Gainesville sound. Bored the shit out of me, but if it's your bag, dig in. (TB)
(Kiss of Death)

V/A – "It Comes From Beyond" CD

I have no idea where to begin with this… I don't know what *Brutarian Quarterly* is since there is no info at all on the CD packaging, but there are 26 songs by 26 bands of almost every genre you can think of on this low-budget comp. I know that there is gonna be some variety on a comp no matter what, but this is just all over the map, from straight-up rock 'n' roll to garage/surf to country-punk and more. Now, I pride myself on having some eclectic tastes in music, but come on! Let's have a little bit of focus on the direction of this comp, so that unsuspecting saps won't see the hip and cool, retro-looking hot-rod-style art on the cover, recognize a couple bands, and think that they're in for a kick-ass time! Instead they're gonna feel cheated out of an hour of their life, like I did. Having said that, other than my complaint about having to skip around all over the CD to find the tracks I liked on here, I'm sure there are three or four good songs for any listener once you eliminate all the genres that you don't care for… (ML)
(Brutarian Quarterly)

V/A – "Matado Por La Muerte" LP

Compilation LPs are a difficult proposition—good bands donate dull songs, then there's always the song from someone's friend's boring band, and so forth and so forth. But the cover of this record, an orange and yellow eye burner, suggested that this would the exception to that depressing rule. And yes, this is one of the best compilation records I have listened to in fucking years. It makes me wanna move to Spain. The recording quality is super shit-fi in the best way, which totally matches the aggro-garage puke punk of the bands compiled. Most hail from the aforementioned Spain, with the exception of the amazing destruction sounds of RATAS DEL VATICANO, from Mexico. There are a few different styles of punk covered, but it totally fits together, probably due to the general aesthetic, and I dug everything on it to some extent. I think it's the fact that all the bands have this total collapse/desperation feel whether they are playing snotty garage (too many bands to mention) or doomy style classic Spanish punk (NOVEDADES CARMINHA) or Cali skate-core—by way of ESKORBUTO, of course (CONCENTRATION SUMMER CAMPS). It's the first time I have actually enjoyed GRUPO SUB 1; I could not get into their LP *at all* despite the endorsement of many of my pals. I don't know if it's the fact that I am listening to this on the shittiest headphones, but they sound fucking rad—total clap hands ass-shakin' crummy punk classix. JUANITA Y LOS FEOS are also on a garage tip, with a drunken dance party feel. MANO DE MONO are as catchy as the BEACH BOYS, if they sniffed glue—like the RAMONES playing "California Sun." COPROLITOS are total bratty puke punk with the raddest lady vocals, they reference KAKA DE LUXE, and who doesn't heart Alaska...? CONCEPTION GLORY BOYS remind me of the Danish *KBD* sound of a few years back. UBER play fast shitty hardcore. PACO FRUTOS Y ESPOSA definitely sound like they've been huffin' something, with a lil' LOS SAICOS sound in there too. I don't know—I could list every band on this pretty much—it makes me wanna send off for all the tapes and 7"s immediately. Seriously, when was the last time you heard a comp that made you actually wanna obtain the available music of pretty much all of the bands contained on it? Let's all move to fucking Spain. (LG)
(Holy Cobra Society / Bowery / La Camorra / Rizillo Super Producciones)

V/A – "Mind Your Own Fucking Business" LP

This record is an international hardcore compilation made in the Netherlands. The music is all over the map on this one. There are 18 different bands (mostly from Northern Europe) and they are all pretty different from each other. I honestly have never heard of a single band on this, but my knowledge of present day international hardcore is somewhat lacking. I can say with modest confidence that TKU TRASHIN and THE DWYERS are the high points of this record, whereas the TOTAL CHAOS-sounding band was the low point for me. But one thing I really liked is how the creators of this comp seemed really into community-building in the international scene. It's a pretty positive record considering the name of the comp. Here is a list of some of the bands—it may mean more for you than it did me: CASTET, CERVELLI STANKI, NEW REALITY, TEENAGE WARNING, FED BY TRASH, KID CHAMELEON, NIESTROY, and a lot more. (FS)
(Teenangel Radical)

V/A – "Psychedelic States: Wisconsin in the '60s" CD

As is common with compilations of alleged "psychedelia," this is a pretty mixed bag. It tends towards poppy garage, which is fine by me since there's very little recorded "psychedelia" that doesn't strike me as boring and self-indulgent (one of the happy exceptions is ORKUSTRA, which is mandatory listening, but don't try it at home kids!). GORDE'S HORDE's "I Don't Care" is the big winner here: there are some other moody garage pop songs on here, but none as weird. If you like that opening number, though, you'll probably find enough on this release to make it worth your while. (DD)
(Gear Fab)

V/A – "Smash It Up" CD

Fourteen bands, each turning in two tracks, mostly on the heavy-rockin', heavy guitar-wanking side of the punk coin. MUSCLE CAR was my favorite band of the comp, playing HC reminiscent of early Orange County faves. "Thirty Nine" by KILLING CALIFORNIA was a good jam; sick riffs and the singer's voice is gnarly-sounding. GECKO BROTHERS has a real strong MOTÖRHEAD vibe, which of course is a good thing. Disappointing moment: CHERI LOVE AFFAIR. Expecting a nasty '70s-era G.G. ALLIN-style band, got early HC with a female singer reminding me of Becki Bondage of VICE SQUAD. Actually, not that disappointing because they're pretty good, but I was obviously expecting something else. A decent compilation to commemorate the 50th release of Motherbox Records. (VL)
(Motherbox)

V/A – "We Went and Recorded It Anyway" CD

This compilation boasts "The Best of Pop-Punk and Power-Pop 1977-'84." "Best" is probably hyperbole, but there *are* some cool tracks on here, along with some filler and throwaways. I was familiar with some bands from other reissues/boots—THE NERVEBREAKERS, RUDI, CRAP DETECTORS, BENIDICT ARNOLD AND THE TRAITORS—but according to the liner notes, a fair amount of material on here is previously unreleased. Speaking of the liner notes, they're a bit shoddily assembled with mistakes and typos apparent. Oh well. I wouldn't call this an essential purchase, but fans of obscure punk/power-pop will probably discover some new want-list fodder. For me, DOUG DEREK AND THE HOAX's track, "Bobby's Got to Get Back to Boston," was the stand-out—a great example of early-'80s wimpy pop that I bet even my grandmother would like. The weirdest thing about this release is that it was done on CD and not vinyl—who's gonna buy a CD collection of old songs with brief liner notes in this day and age when you can get basically the same thing off a bunch of blogs? (CS)
(Brutarian Quarterly)

VA – "When The Kids Go Go Go Crazy: A Tribute to the Groovie Ghoulies" CD

I don't wanna sound like I'm shitting on the work of others by saying this, but do we really need another tribute CD? It doesn't really matter what band is being covered—they could be amazing, they could be terrible. Tributes never really live up to the original bands work any way you look at it. This one in particular strikes me as odd. Weren't the GROOVIE GHOULIES still a band up until a few years ago? Has the time already come that somebody felt the need for 30 or so bands (mostly from Germany, in this case) to pay respect to those who came before them? I guess it has, and this is the product. Shit, apparently the GROOVIE GHOULIES had covered "Deviltown" by DANIEL JOHNSTON, and guess what? It made the cut! I guess there's not much else to say here other than if you are a fan of the GROOVIE GHOULIES and are into covers/tributes, you'll probably like this. (BD)
(Kamikaze)

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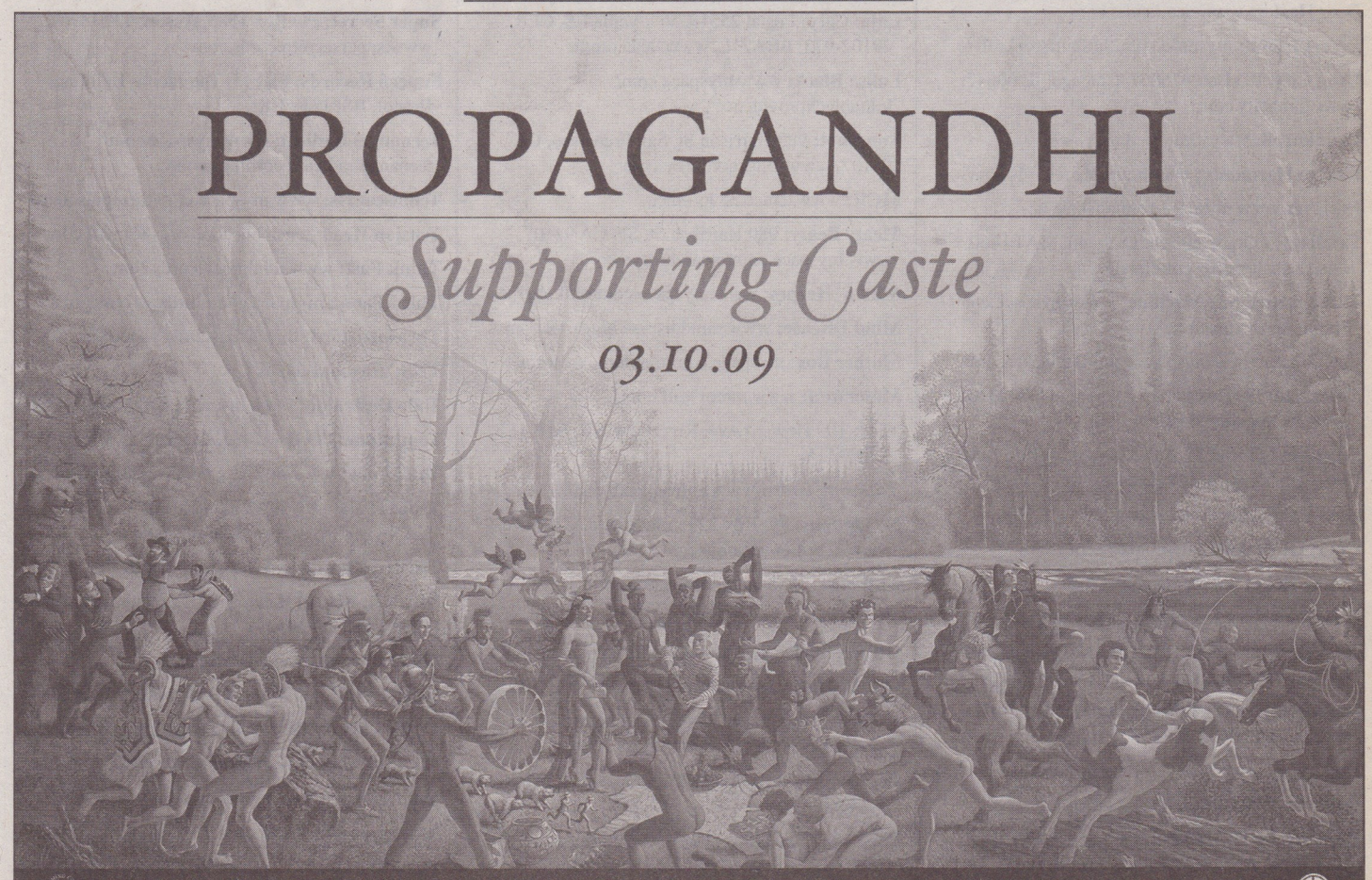

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Send demos and CD-Rs to: MRR attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Dan Goetz, Vinnie La Russa and Justin Rodemeyer.

CONTAGUIM – Starting off with a sample from *Waking Life*, these promising Halifax crusters interlace their slower HELLBASTARD and AMEBIX influences with fast, tight, d-beat crust breaks. While the song-writing could use some streamlining and some of the guitar lines fall a little flat (there's a quiet guitar outro that's painfully out of tune), there are some seriously catchy riffs to be found in here, and the tension between the slow and fast parts is effective. Be sure to check them out when they come to your town on their two month upcoming tour of the US and Canada. (Justin R) (5-song CD, no lyrics included, myspace.com/contagiumhalifax, xcraniumxingesterx@hotmail.com)

THE CYSTS – NIHILISTICS and THE MOB (NY) come to mind, as well as MECHT MENSCH at half speed in a couple of dirgier moments. The recording is blown to shit, with drums that sound like machine guns, and the vocals have a DEEP WOUND quality with the snot dried up because the singer's been popping Ephedrine for all I know. Four short songs and it's over all too soon. (Dan) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, jamessqueaky@yahoo.com)

DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES – Blasts of up-beat post-punk, reminding me of THE WEDDING PRESENT and later HUSKER DU. Lots of intricate guitar parts and a singer that oddly enough reminds me of the singer from NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL. (Vinnie) (5-song CD, lyrics included, $3ppd to Stankhouse Records, 33 NE Cook St, Portland, OR 97212)

DODESKADEN – Pretty awesome Swedish hardcore with three vocalists, songs about political protest, drinking, personal issues, the usual. Well-executed and well written, the short songs vary in tempo from half-time stomp to raging d-beat, and benefit from an excellent bass player, catchy riffs, and more furious back-and-forth vocal trade-offs than you can shake a stick at. If you like early TOTALITAR-style Swedish hardcore compacted into two minute songs, pick this one up. (Justin R) (8-song CD, lyrics included, www.dodeskaden.se)

DRONE THRONE – Whoa. This thing is a beast, heavy and sludgy reminding me of an evil version of SLEEP's *Holy Mountain* period. Though while SLEEP sang about smoking pot and Christian mysticism, these guys sing about smoking pot and Satan. So, I guess that whole *evil*-thing makes sense. Fuzzed out bass and vocals, nicely distorted guitars, samples that reference crime and Satan… Who the fuck are these guys and where are they from? This does not sound like a band producing their first demo but well-seasoned veterans. If you have any interest in stoner rock/metal track this down! (Vinnie) (5-song CD, no lyrics included, www.myspace.com/dronethrone)

LOTUS FUCKER – Five kids from suburban Maryland, none of whom own bullet belts or skinny pants, who with this demo are giving ATROCIOUS MADNESS and LEBENDEN TOTEN a serious run for their money in the Japanese hardcore worship by US band department. LOTUS FUCKER takes all the raw riffing, the fog of feedback and mangled leads and everything else, brings in some FRAMTID influence, and molds everything into eight songs that flow perfectly and are varied enough to keep them from blending together, bookended by two flawless mid-paced numbers and played without stopping. The drumming is chaotic but dynamic, and nothing less than dead on, and the production is amped up a bit in order to let everything blast through unhindered. Best demo of 2008. (Dan) (8-song cassette/CD, no lyrics included, 8397 Piping Rock Ct., Millersville, MD 21108)

MAYHEM DECAL CUDGEL – This CDR demo contains 53 blasts of noise from this Brazilian band, culled from their early '90s rehearsal demo and split with Infernal Noise, which seemingly were recorded with the same boom-box in their practice space. Perhaps attempting to skirt the line between grind and noise, they unfortunately fall short of actually being good at either. The only thing interesting in the music happens when the drummer can't keep up and loses the beat, and/or comes in at the wrong moment, thus possibly giving the false impression that there is something artsy going on. But no, it's just incompetence covered up by the worst recording ever. Check out Japan's GORE BEYOND NECROPSY if you're craving some crazy noise-grind filth. (Justin) (53-song CD, no lyrics included, Zach Howard, PO Box 2, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303 or chaosnonmusca@gmail.com)

POPITILOPITILUS – Wild and chaotic punk rock that's also quite quirky. It feels like a gigantic cacophony of noise but it's actually played well and tightly. Each song has a number of different parts, and each part has a number of different singers. It's grating on my psyche and leads me to consider this the WHITEHOUSE of pop-punk. Super-weird song titles: "Dicky Winter," "Clicky Jew Beard," "Spermacetti," "Space Cheetah," and "Crying Space Cheetah." *Sheeeesssh.* Witches and warlocks play in this band, I know it. Overall, it's played well and pretty great for a demo, but I can't handle this. It's like Big Bird on an eight-hit bad acid trip; it's the soundtrack to a clown orgy; it's what would be playing in the background as Ronald McDonald slowly slices your throat. Fuck. (Vinnie) (6-song CD, no lyrics included, $3 PPD to Stankhouse Records, 33 NE Cook St, Portland, OR 97212)

R-K-T-P – Kids from Green Bay turn in this effort, which is pretty cool. Live four-track recordings done by this eclectic four-piece. The faster songs as well as the seriousness of the lyrical content and guitar intricacies remind me of ARTICLES OF FAITH. However, they slow it down for a few moments and I'm reminded of FUGAZI. The *R* and the K and the T and the P are the initials of the band members. Incidentally they are in need of a drummer, so Vic Bondi fans in the Green Bay area who want to see your initial added, you should write them. Everyone else should just check out the CD, which can be had for free. (9-song CD, lyrics included, FREE by emailing rygarlando@yahoo.com)

SICK JUMP! – The cover of this thing has the Bad Brains lightning bolt striking down a bong, so you sort of know what to expect. Straightforward thrashy hardcore punk recorded live and loose, song titles such as "Stoner with a Boner" and "Sbarro Sucks" likely give the listener insight into the lives of these three, and the singer sounds like Springa drunk out of his mind (which is funny to think about). I have to say though, I'd probably enjoy seeing this band at a drunkass party. (Dan) (13-song cassette, no lyrics included, myspace.com/sickjump)

SMARTBEAR – This band has a thing for bears. All songs are, "for, about, and by bears," though I don't know if they are referencing furry animals or furry men. They're very creative with the song titles: "Nightbear on Elm Street" and "Eat Cops." Cute. The packaging is considerable: two buttons, a sticker, and a white and furry cover for the slip case of the cassette. As for the music, it's thrash-y, traditional punk rock that reminds me of BLACK FLAG at times. There are only three songs so I was not able to get that strong of a sense of the band, but what I heard was pretty good. I recommend checking this out but you're on your own for direction as to where to file this in your cassette section. (Vinnie) (3-song cassette, no lyrics included, www.myspace.com/omgnightbear)

SMART BOMB – This sort of sounds like CUT THE SHIT with simpler riffs and a cleaner guitar tone, with hints of YOUTH OF TODAY in the riffs and vocal delivery, and it's mostly fast except for a couple of non-gratuitous youth crew breakdowns. Definitely a good start. (Dan) (4-song CD, lyrics included, smartbomb@freemail.com/mk)

3-WAY SWITCH – The band's note that accompanied this demo mentioned that it's a *fretless* bass that's used in this band. Red flags and warning bells were immediately set. But, I'm enjoying this. Post-punk that reminds me a lot of FUGAZI and at times MISSION OF BURMA. The songs are written and recorded well. Without looking at the band's info I had a strong feeling they were from Seattle. I don't know why, and it's not because they sound like SOUNDGARDEN or anything but something in it reminded me of the Emerald city, one of my favorite places in the United States. (Vinnie) (5-song CD, no lyrics included, www.myspace.com/threewayswitch)

V/A – "The Big She-Bang" – Compilation of groups for a feminist event at ABC No Rio that happened in August, who went on to form *For the Birds*, a feminist collective and distro. Nineteen bands playing nineteen different songs, the majority of which lie somewhere between emo and indie, with a few more aggressive numbers. My favorites were BLONDE AMBITION, who was the most thrashy of the comp, and AYE NAKO! who reminded me of CRINGER. (Vinnie) (19-song CD, no lyrics included, www.myspace.com/forthebirdsnyc)

SIX TWO FIVE

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Coll.CD of 1000mph blasting fastcore

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CALIFORNIA LOVE-CD: Grindviolence
IRON LUNG/SHANK LP/CD-Brutality on CD
BREAKFAST 2nd LP:Tokyo skate-thrash
SECOND OPINION - CD High Energy thrash
BARBARIC THRASH CD COMPS:Euro,CaliComps
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SHANK-LP/CD: 1000mph power violence
MACHINEGUN ROMANTICS-CD: TX fastcore
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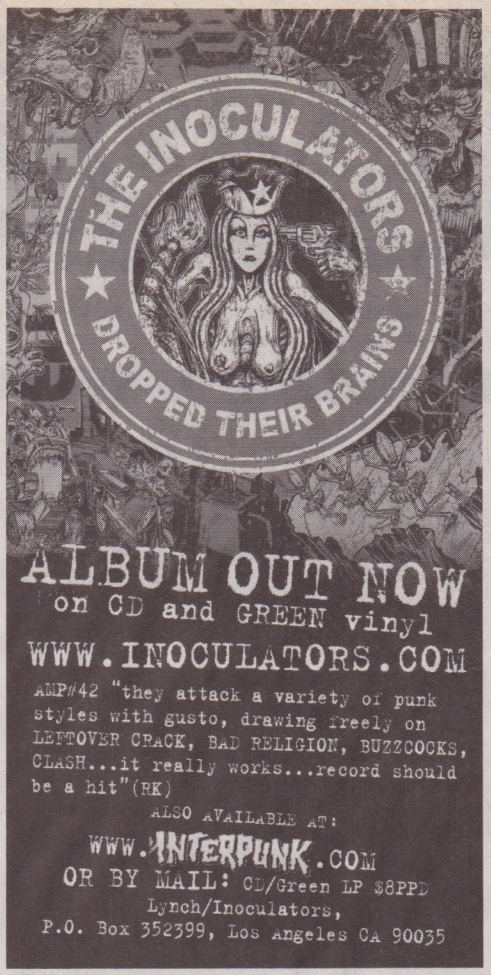

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ZINES

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

Reviews by:
(DA) Diane Anastasio
(JD) Judy Balmin
(JB) Julia Booze
(KC) Karoline Collins
(LG) Layla Gibbon
(DG) Dan Goetz
(BG) Bob Goldie
(CH) Cassie Harwood
(MJ) Meredith Jones
(JM) Jeff Mason
(CR) Casey Ress
(CI) Cissie Scurlock
(DS) Dionne Stevens

BIG WHOOP! #3 / $?
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 90 pgs
If I had to choose between this or *Uncle John's Absolutely Absorbing Bathroom Reader*, I think would choose *Big Whoop!* This zine ranks high on the bathroom readability scale-tons of band reviews (Kindergarten Hazing Ritual, Black Hell, Mans 7000 Dying Rats) a crap ton of record reviews, and some pointless (good) and meandering (better) columns from various contributors. This fanzine is great because it doesn't take anything too seriously and has plenty of dumb clip art. (MJ)
Joe the Stache / 1182 Morning Dr. / Santa Fe, NM 87507
www.myspace.com/bigwhoopzine

BRAINS #3 / $3
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 48 pgs
This is a story about zombies. It is also a story about skinheads, boneheads, and punks. It is a story about when skinheads and punks become skinhead and punk zombies, and how their human counterparts combat the walking dead among them. *Romper Stomper* meets *Night of the Living Dead*! This zombie tale is really well written and worth checking out. (CH)
815 NE Emerson St. / Portland, OR 97211
www.myspace.com/brainszine

BRAINWASH #2 / $1ppd, trade, $2 int'l
5.5 x 7 – copied – 28 pgs
Crude and classic punk zine here. It was fun to read. There are short, funny, and awkward interviews with Cult Ritual and American Cheeseburger, a crazy story about having to castrate a hog, a bitter and humorous article on restaurant etiquette, some feminism basics, record reviews… They've packed it all in, and *Brainwash* has that cool feeling of innocence that you get from reading older zines. I wish more folks in small towns would put together zines like this (CI)
1617 Victory Dr. Apt. B / Valdosta, GA 31601

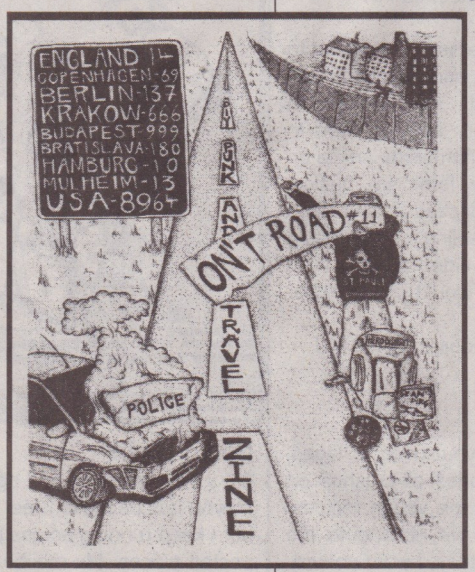
CATNAP #2 / free
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 12pgs
Bored teenagers! Give me your boob collages, your night-sweats, your stories of crushes on pregnant girls, I need it all, the vegan recipes, the poetry, the comics! Leave nothing to the imagination, I want diary entries, I want absurdity, I want more than twelve pages. (JB)
Catnap / 260 Molino Ave. #A / Long Beach, CA 90803
catnapzine@gmail.com

CHOOSE DEATH #1 / $1
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 14 pgs
A hardcore/punk fanzine out of the Syracuse-area scene in New York. This is a quick flip-through zine, with a feature on Black SS and some interviews with Syracuse bands Human Shapes and Oak & Bone. This might interest you if you're either from the Syracuse area and can share in the author's NY scene memories, or if you are curious about what the featured bands' members have to say—otherwise there's little else in the way of content. (CH)
Joshua Smith / 8195 Route 13 / Canastota, NY 13032

DOLL #258 / $?
8.5 x 11 – printed – 122 pgs
Maybe it is because I feel like I'm getting older, but I keep running across pornography in unexpected places. My mailbox, graffiti around elementary schools, and in the pages of *Doll*! Twice! Both depicting bondage or violence, respectively. Are glossy punk mags the same as pornography? Maybe you get the same feeling of slight shame at the possibility of being seen with your face tucked into a full color music magazine, with all the slithery pages slipping and sliding between your fingers, as you would if you were caught masturbating on the Muni? Uh, sorry. The thought crosses my mind that I might possibly feel the same sheepish guilt squealing over a picture of Jackie Fox from like, the '70s, the same way I might if I was looking at my cat's cleavage. I mean, c'mon, the girls in the Runaways were *total jailbait*. Or maybe your face turns red looking at like ten different pictures of various members of Discharge, the cover models for this issue, all looking punk as fuck until you see the picture that is "current" and you wonder who let the cave men out of the

cave? There are of course a fuck ton of other band interviews, such as Alex Cox, Planet Smasher, No Fun At All, Conquest For Death, Raise A Flag, B.D. Union, Cripple Bastards, and so on, all in Japanese, and ads to the max. (JB)
Doll No.303 Aota Bldg / 3-1-9, Kita, Kohenji / Suginami-Ku, Tokyo

EARTH FIRST! Jan.-Feb. '09 / $4.50 US & Canada
11 x 17 – printed – 32 pgs
This is the "radical environmental journal" put out by a branch of the famous activist group. It is huge and packed with writing. Sometimes it's like cheerleading for environmental or animal activism, sometimes it's informative, sometimes critical. I like the last two but not really the first one. Unfortunately, I would say that, by a small margin, it is more cheerleading than anything else. These types of articles are the equivalent of the empty "unity! Support the scene!" calls, however heartfelt, one can or did find in less-finely honed hardcore zines. An example of this type is Jezzabell's piece on the various roles played by community-based and transient activists, or Olive's look at the life and death of an English activist.
The critical pieces seemed more substantial to me. One looks at the way an anti-freeway campaign was dominated by an affinity group's decision to have a tree sit. Another points out the lack of sustainability in the supposedly "green" energy sources, wind and solar. There are updates from many campaigns and news stories; a common-sense attack on Myspace, detailing how information from it frequently turns up in trials, and the extent to which Myspace is partnered with law enforcement; a lawyer answers questions concerning restitution (which is when the court demands you pay the assholes you were protesting against for fucking up their shit), just to name a few of the articles I was excited about. If you are whole-hog for this scene, then please dive in, as there is plenty of information and such to be had. A tighter, meaner paper would be one I would watch for consistently. There are very few ads and one review. The price is reasonable for the quantity of writing. (JM)
Daily Planet Publishing – Earth First! / POB 3023 / Tucson, AZ 85702
www.earthfirstjournal.org



THE EAST VILLAGE INKY #39 / $3
5.5 x 8 – copied – 38 pgs
This is a very attractive little buddy. It's the ten-year anniversary issue. The layout is thoughtful and obviously practiced and the drawings are super cute. It's extremely readable and inviting. The first big part of this issue is the musings of one punk momma, the author, reminiscing about and exploring her old neighborhood. She writes about where all the old mom-and-pop shops used to be, witnessing her old playground getting torn down, and the like. There's another section called "The Good, the Bag & the Ugly… of Selected Causes & Effects of 10 Years of Zine Publishing." There's some stuff all writers can relate to, like some juicy, snarky internet blog warfare. You can also find a cartoon strip, children's gift guide, responses to readers' letters, and lots of other interesting little bits. I vote for Ayun Halliday to do another ten years of creative, heart-warming excellence. (JD)
Ayun Halliday P.O.Box 22754, Brooklyn, NY 11202
ayun@ayunhalliday.com

END OF A PERFECT DAY #11 - The Trans-Canadian Nightmare / $2 or trade
4.5 x 5.5 – copied – 44 pgs
I have never come across a more classic example of a cautionary tale. This typical, to the point, sometimes rather poetic and self-aware travel zine makes me never want to train hop or hitch hike *ever*. The story seems to get worse and worse, if I wasn't positive that the punks made it out simply because they lived to tell about it, (and because I suspect there are some parents somewhere that would have bailed them out if they *really* needed it) I might have wanted to stop reading because of the fear that someone wouldn't make it. I have to say I definitely expected the narrator to get a beat down when he confronted one of the many racist and terrifying drivers that pick them up. There are some higher points, such as the development of a friendship, and seeing it persevere with the occasional glimpses into the countryside of rural Canada, and reflection on traveling that makes sense out of struggle, but, mostly, it is one kick in the face after another. The layout is basic enough, words pasted over a map or two, but here and there some artistic choices are beautiful, surprising and authentic. If I were to recommend this to anyone specific, it would be to the youthful and idealistic among us who have ever uttered the phrase "house punk". Otherwise, it is not for the faint of heart. (JB)
54 Cumberland St. Apt 3R / Brooklyn, NY 11025

THE INNER SWINE vol.14 #4 / $2
5.5 x 8 – copied – 60 pgs
In this latest installment, Jeff devotes most of his bile to children—their awful behavior, the strange lives they lead in movies, and fantastic devices he's imagined to fix some of these problems. The Inner Swine is consistent in its publishing and tenor, and while it has consistently been "not my thing," this issue does seem to be less-inspired with considerably more filler graphics than usual. The layout is extremely basic computer-style, like you would have learned in high school in 1994. This said, I can see how some people could find his writing funny and enjoyable (it is distinctive) and enjoy his shtick. Mine will be in the free bin. (JM)
PO Box 3024 / Hoboken, NJ 07030
www.innerswine.com

MYSTERY ILLNESS / $1ppd US, $2 int'l, trade
5.5 x 4.5 – copied – 44 pgs
OK, first off, as I get older my vision gets worse, and I'm pretty sure this is natural, so folks that are doing zines with tiny photocopied hardwriting either gotta start writing larger or refuse to let their zines fall into the hands of anyone over the age of 27 or something. Although *Mystery Illness* was hard to read, I managed to get through it. Its contents consist of a comic dedicated to one man's struggle with mysterious, untreatable, and constant body pain. His narrative reads a lot like many of the stories in the health section of this issue of *MRR*, except he's included crude drawings to go along with his words. It's truly a sweet and sad story, and he effectively conveys all of the frustration in dealing with the world of doctors and hospitals, and the vagueness around the whole institution of medicine. (CI)
Raphi Gottesman / 1918 Haste St. Lower / Berkeley, CA 94704
raphi30@hotmail.com

NOTHING SOLD #6 / $2 ppd or trade
5.5 x 4.25 - copied - 20 pgs
This issue consists of a loosely categorized rant on why humans shouldn't procreate. Weston attacks religious tradition, societal expectations, and pro-life attitudes that all emphasize the need for new human life, goes on to attack meat eaters and the human race in general, and ends with a plea for those who want kids to adopt as well as plans for his own vasectomy. The writing is entertaining and a few steps above "stupid people shouldn't breed" sloganeering or teenage online journal ranting, but is most likely intended to be read/enjoyed by those who already agree. (DG)
Weston Czerkies / 310 Highland Ave / Syracuse, NY 13203
nothingsolidzine@yahoo.com

ON T'ROAD #11/$3
9x6.5 –printed – 40 pages
Unsurprisingly, given the title, this is a zine about being on the road. Mostly with the Finnish band Hero Dishonest both in the UK and the USA. It's well written, and I imagine you'll like it,

or find it dull, depending how into reading other people's tour diaries you are. The writer came across as a bit of a whiner, mostly because of his continuous complaints that he couldn't get wasted every second of the day, it just made him seem kind of spoiled and bratty. *But* he was on tour with a Finnish hardcore band. And he's English–the land where complaining and drinking are national pastimes. Also he seems to call every African American he encounters a gangster, which was really fucking weird. There's a piece on the politics of football, and his personal history—about supporting a small time team, Farsley Celtic versus going to see Leeds United. I found this pretty non-compelling, but I imagine there's an audience out there who would really dig it. He wanted us to mention he would be on the West Coast soon, but he didn't mention when. (LG)
14 Hessle Mount, Leeds, England LS6 1EP UK

OX FANZINE #81 / 4.50 Euro
8.5 x 11 – printed – 130 pgs
I should be able to decipher more of the content of this glossy German mag, but five years of studying the language leaves me picking out only a few words and phrases here and there. On the surface, *Ox* seems to be a pretty informative punk publication that leans a little more towards the mainstream in its coverage than most of the fanzines I would normally pick up. The first few pages include news, which focuses this month on recent anti-Nazi protests in Cologne, as well as general updates on everything from festivals and touring bands to upcoming book releases and recent deaths in the community. My favorite section is "A bis Z," through which readers discover random tidbits of information about a featured band each month. This time we delve into the minds of Liverpool's SSS, who claim that "Helter Skelter" kicked off heavy metal. This month also features interviews with several bands I thought had called it quits, like the International Noise Conspiracy, X-Ray Spex, and the Adicts, plus interviews with Off With Their Heads, Massachusetts straight edge band Have Heart, and about a dozen others. And if you're into acid rock these days, the dudes from Triclops enthusiastically provide readers with lists of the best acid rock records of all time in this issue. (DA)
PO Box 11 04 20 / 42664 / Solingen, Germany
www.ox-fanzine.de

PAJOMO #2 / trade or letter and stamps
4.25 x 5 – copied – 32 pgs
A zine filled to the brim with show reviews, mostly focusing on the Bellingham, Washington area, is not overwhelmingly exciting to me, mainly because I have absolutely no connection to that place. It does, however, seem like a nice resource or a piece of nostalgia for those who frequent punk happenings in the area, and I can definitely see the appeal of writing show reviews in order to allow other people insight into the inner workings of different punk communities. But to the non-Washington punk, the reviews may become a bit redundant and tiresome. Nonetheless, the author's dedication to the printed form and his outright refusal to succumb to the tempting realm of the internet are absolutely necessary ideals for the now technology-driven punk community. This zine also acts as a call for submissions to *Nobe Pajomo*, a mail-art zine to be released sometime in the Spring. So if that interests you, definitely check this one out. The author's aims to create a more global punk network through the creation of mail-art and the rejection of the internet are intriguing and incredibly important at this point of technological takeover. (DA)
PO Box 2632 / Bellingham, WA 98227-2632

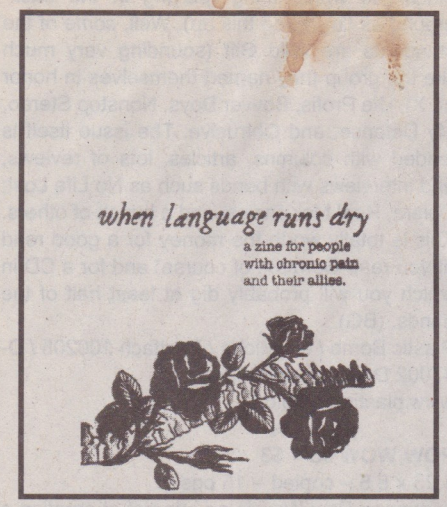
PASAZER #25 / $?
8.5 x 11 - printed - 160 pgs
For all practical purposes, this is the *Plastic Bomb* of Poland: glossy cover, slick layouts that cover bands ranging from Anti Flag to Skit System to Murphy's Law as well as Polish bands, and two CD comps that fall out when you open the thing. I'm tempted to dismiss this based on everything I've mentioned above, but given the language barrier, I think this does serve its purpose as far as exposing Polish kids who might not know English to a wide variety of local and international bands, however hit or miss they might be. Between ads for Riot Grrl clothing and John Joseph talking about his book, there's a piece on early DC hardcore complete with the old flyers and classic pictures, as well as one on "DIY" that I gather is about the scenes that surrounded labels such as SST, Crass, Dischord, and BYO. With any luck, this will inspire Polish punks to do their own zines and kill the relevance of this one. (DG)

PO Box 42 / 39-201 Debica 3 / Poland

PLASTIC BOMB #65 / ? 3.50
11.75 x 8.25 – printed – 78 pgs
Here's another excellent large-format German punk zine with a ton of reviews and interviews, plus a 31 track CD compilation to keep you wishing you knew how to read the language so you could enjoy it more. I'll start by mentioning the CD, since that's the most accessible for me. Yes, like most comp CDs that come with zines, there're a few bands you've heard of and a shit ton you haven't, but I have to say this is surprisingly pretty good! The vast majority of the songs fall under the melodic punk and hardcore category. Out of the 31 bands it's pretty hard to name the standouts because I'm digging pretty much the whole thing (playing in the background as I'm typing this up). Well, *some* of the standouts are Wild Gift (sounding very much like the group they named themselves in honor of, X), Die Profis, Bovver Boys, Nonstop Stereo, My Defense, and Obtrusive. The issue itself is loaded with columns, articles, lots of reviews, and interviews with bands such as No Life Lost, Colera, Real McKenzies, and a bunch of others. This is totally worth the money for a good read (if you read German, of course) and for a CD in which you will probably dig at least half of the bands. (BG)
Plastic Bomb / c/o Micha / Postfach 100205 / D-47002 Duisburg, Germany
www.plastic-bomb.de

POW WOW #3 / $3
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 16 pgs
I suppose *Pow Wow* is an attempt at creating a controversial "in-your-face" comic with its references to John Wayne Gacy, heroin withdrawal. and white supremacy music. Instead it is only mildly irritating in its subject manner, and somewhat worthwhile in its illustrations. Ho hum. (CR)
Cath "Chlorinolda" Joyal / 1353 Champlain / Montreal, QC H2L 2R9 / Canada
boredtobewild@hotmail.com

PUNK LIFE #40/$?
5.5x4.25 – copied – 50 pages
This is a really strange zine, written in an almost stream-of-conscious style, flipping between decades and eras with no explanation. A review of SF burrito places that was obviously done in the early '90s has scrawled notes beneath it, and he explains that he has no idea what he means by a particular statement, which was really confusing. Why would you run an article written over a decade ago if it confuses you? Especially where the food quality could change significantly over such a period of time! It"s a strangely fascinating zine though. There are interviews with lots of DC punkers, where he asks the same questions—about their favorite burrito spot, favorite record, and whether they like Safeway mango/peach salsa. (He states, however, that this is in no way an endorsement of Safeway products – so bizarre). People from Mi Amil/ Black Eyes, Most Secret Method, Girls Vs Boys among others answer, and I kinda like reading random interviews like that—mundane yet strangely compelling. And that is how I would describe this zine. There's a cool story about growing up in suburban So Cal, getting into punk, and going to see the CLASH and the WHO, and having the teenage conflict of classic rock vs. punk rock partially resolved… (LG)
2601 Sinclair Ave #9 / Concord, CA, 94519
omdharma@hotmail.com



ROCK HARDI #37 / ? 7
8.5 x 5.75 – printed – 64 pgs
Seven Euros! Wow, that seems pretty steep for a zine that's essentially a clean, record label-type deal with not much to offer beyond a bunch of interviews and reviews (and a few cool illustrations by Paskal le Raskal). Yes, there is a "bonus" CD included, but who the fuck would drop this much cash (about $10) on a fairly standard zine otherwise? OK, enough of being a dick here, I'll get on to the positives. First, I have to say that there is a pretty hefty load of reviews, including CDs, demos, DVDs and more; and the interviews are pretty thorough, featuring the Hives, the Gorgons, and the Dum Dum Boys, plus a few others. Secondly, the CD comp features some damn good garage punk like the Wild Zeros, Sonic Assassin, Knucklebone, the Primevals, the Gorgons, and a few others. There are eighteen tracks in all, and the sound quality is excellent (and after listening to the whole thing I have to say all the bands are excellent, and they should be the selling point of this thing). I would recommend this for garage punk enthusiasts, especially those who speak French, but I would think more people could be exposed to these bands (and this zine) if it were a bit cheaper. (BG)
Rock Hardi / 3 rue Beausoleil / 63100 Clermont-Ferrand, France
www.rockhardi.com

TNS RECORDS FANZINE #3 / Free
8.5 x 6 – copied – 18 pgs
This fanzine is put out by the newly launched UK punk and ska record label TNS. It focuses on promoting bands from the label, but reviews records from other labels as well. This issue is sparse—there is an interview with the TNS band the Shadowcops, Sonic Boom Six, and also covers the UK festival Strummer fest (dedicated to the memory of the most righteous Joe Strummer, duh) and bands and people who performed at the festival. This is a pretty fun read, the effort put into it is heartfelt and thorough. If I had to judge *TNS* on the British quality spectrum from "brilliant" to "a real crap read," I would choose the ranking closer to the former. (MJ)
thatsnotskanking@hotmail.com

TOOTHWORM #3 / ?
8.5 x 7 – copied – 24 pgs
Although the author of these pages is a fairly new arrival to the Bay Area, the aesthetic feel of this zine has Berkeley written all over it—handwritten observations of the seedier side of life while fueled on alcohol and coffee. This is definitely not a bad thing, but the crossed out and scribbled mistakes within the pages sometimes makes me wonder if this is done deliberately, since practically ever zine in this style does this. I don't mean to completely pan this, however, as there are a few interesting items throughout the pages. I dig the random Sam McPheeters-esque drawings of distorted bodies throughout, and the confession of susceptibility to superstition, especially to that of the Mayan calendar and the end of the world. On the other hand, the writings on boozing seemed clichéd, and the "erotic" poems seemed like they were written by a sixth grader. A mixed bag, but pretty enjoyable overall. (BG)
E. Conner / PO Box 3265 / Berkeley, CA 94703
toofworm@gmail.com

WHEN LANGUAGE RUNS DRY: A ZINE FOR PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC PAIN AND THEIR ALLIES #1 / $4
8.5 x 11 – copied with silkscreened cover – 48 pgs
What does it mean to have chronic pain and to be a part of a subculture like punk that often ignores issues of disability/immobility? How can allies of those who experience chronic pain make changes in their actions and in their communities to better suit the needs of all involved? How does chronic pain come to mark one's identity and render them invisible to our larger culture? How are those who do not experience this pain implicated in the erasure of other peoples' identities? This zine's first piece is a perfect starting point for thinking about these issues, as the author lays out her definitions of pain before and after being diagnosed with Degenerative Disc Disease. Concepts of pain that were once tangible and rooted in concrete injuries with direct solutions for healing and easily identifiable modes of prevention may no longer feel relevant with the onset of chronic pain. This compilation of seven writings on chronic pain and illness is essential reading for those who experience chronic pain, as well as for their allies who aim to gain a greater understanding of the pain experience. As a person who has never experienced chronic pain or serious illness, I found this zine to be helpful in its ability to illuminate both the emotional and physical challenges that people face, as well as the questions people like myself must examine in order to better care for our loved ones. The essays inside cover issues of capitalism's influence on the way we view illness, the impact of race/gender/class on peoples' experiences with pain, as well as, societal pressures to be "brave" in the face of trauma. The contributors aim to put words to unspeakable experiences and indescribable sensations. For those who are searching for concrete ways to heal from chronic pain, and for those who seek a direct plan for helping those who have chronic pain, this zine may not contain the answers. If anything, the writing within points exactly to the intangible and amorphous qualities of chronic pain, healing and support. It is imperative that people begin having dialogues about how to better support each other in the realm of health and accessibility, and zines like this one are important steps in understanding the needs of community members. I'm excited that this is an ongoing project and can't wait for the next issue. (DA)
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ZOMBIE BOMB #38 / $1 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 25 pgs
This little duder contains three zombie themed comics. The cover and the first story, which takes up the first 17 pages of the book, feature messy, scribbled drawings of gross stuff. The handwritten cursive lettering is very appealing. It was all going well enough until I hit upon some pretty immature content. The most annoying thing was the repeated scene of zombies tearing off and eating different women's tits. I don't care if the author is female, it's still classic misogynist imagery and I see enough of that shit in Quentin Tarantino movies. But I don't think the author had bad intentions. I'm sure lots of people would enjoy her tale of a gory, massacred hipster party. And the random tombstone that reads "Gaydolf Shittler." The other two stories are well composed and visually compelling. I appreciate the satanic furby drawing on the back page. I'm assuming that it's saying "You doo doo AIDS" because it had been put it in the microwave for a few minutes. Overall, I would say this issue is not horrifically lame. (JD)
Chelsea Lea c/o Pipe Bomb / 3623 N. Haight / Portland, OR 97227
zinepipebomb@yahoo.com

feb-march//nine two four gilman

Fri, Feb. 13th • $8 • doors @ 7:30
Arise (record release & tour kickoff!)
Embryonic Devourment
Tousandswilldie
Destroy the Colossus
Claud Oxidado • The Aftermath

Sat, Feb. 14st • $8 • doors @ 7:30
Fog Of War
Zombie Holocaust • Exmortus (LA)
Bonded By Blood (LA)
Rattlehead (LA) • Invection

Sun, Feb. 15th • free • noon-5pm
Gilman Cleanup Day!
no show • free pizza!

TWO SHOWS!
Fri, Feb. 20th &
Sat, Feb. 21st
$10 • 7pm
Zero Boys
only West Coast shows!
Release Parties for
"Vicious Circle" & "History Of"

Fri, Feb. 20th w/ Black Fork
Broken Needle (LA)
ADT • Crucial Cause

Sat, Feb. 21st w/ Stitches (LA)
Bodies • Nuts And Bolts • Nothington

Fri, Feb. 27th
DCOI • All or Nothing HC
Violation • For The Win
Wolves And Thieves

Sat, Feb. 28th • $10
Ceremony • Cruel Hand
Crucified • Skin Like Iron
Mind • Street Walkers

Fri., March 13th • $10 • doors @ 7pm
Countdown To Extinction Fest
Saviours • Attitude Adjustment
Agenda Of Swine
Deathstryke

Fri., March 20th • $10 • doors @ 7pm
Speed Trials 2009!
California Love
Laughing Dog (NM)
Maggot Colony (Visalia)
Endless Demise (LA)
Strains Of The Apocalypse
Bastard Ass (LA)
I Abhor (LA) • Semtex Vest (OC)
+ more TBA

Sat., March 21st • $10 • doors @ 7pm
Speed Trials 2009!
In Disgust • Kill The Client (TX)
Final Draft (LA)
Population Reduction • SFN (WI)
Hummingbird Of Death (ID)
Thousandswilldie (floor set)
Sidetracked (WA)
Brucexcambell (LA)
Migraine (floor set)
Car Vs. Los (Peru)
+ more TBA

Sat., March 22nd
Olehole • Dateless (WA)
Hudson Falcons (NJ) • Albert Square

Shows are $5-10 and doors usually open at 8:00 pm; bigger shows at 7:30pm. Come an hour early to volunteer (and get in free!). $2 yearly membership required. All ages! No alcohol! We do not welcome violence or racist, sexist or homophobic behavior...

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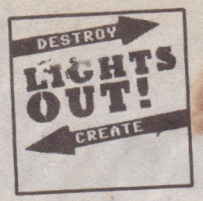

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